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Selected and introduced by
Samuel Terrien



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THE NEW TESTAMENT
IN SHORTER FORM

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IN MODERN TRANSLATION

J. B. Phillips

SELECTED AND INTRODUCED BY

Samuel Terrien

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
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INTRODUCTION



Historical Background to the New Testament

The New Testament is a collection of thirty-nine small books and letters which were written in Greek about Jesus and the early church during the first and second centuries A.D.

The name "New Testament" stands for a longer title, "The Books of the New Covenant." The first Christians were Jews who thought that they formed a new Israel, according to a new mode of communion with God—"a new alliance," or "a new covenant." The expression "new covenant" was translated into Latin as "*Novum Testamentum*," and later into English as "New Testament."

In order to understand this strange language, we must look briefly at the events which led to the beginning of Christianity.

Ever since the Roman general Pompey entered the Temple of Jerusalem in 63 B.C., Jews violently opposed the occupation by Roman armies. Their land became a part of a foreign kingdom, ruled for Rome by an astute and cruel Idumean, Herod the Great (37-4 B.C.).¹ After his death, the district of Judaea around the city of Jerusalem was attached to the Roman province of Syria. Roman governors or "procurators" administered the region in the name of the Caesars. History has remembered Pontius Pilate, one of these governors, simply because it was under his administration that Jesus was put to death (A.D. 29-30).

¹ The name "Idumean" is derived from the name "Edom," which designated the enemy brother of Israel (Esau and Jacob, Genesis 25:25ff.). The descendants of the Edomites were called in Roman times "Idumeans." They lived at the edge of the desert of Arabia, south of the Dead Sea.

Riots occurred frequently, and police repression was ruthless. As a Jewish boy, Jesus traveled often with his family from Nazareth, in the northern district of Galilee, to Jerusalem, the capital of Judaea, in the south. In A.D. 6, he may have walked before thousands of wooden crosses which had been planted along the road to Jerusalem by the soldiers of Varus, a Roman general. To these crosses were attached the corpses of Jewish patriots who had attempted to rise against Rome.

Living in an atmosphere of horror, many Jews found comfort in hoping for the end of the world. They believed that God would any day send his Messiah from the "clouds of heaven" (Daniel 7:13). The word "Messiah" is an English form of the Hebrew *Mashiach*, "Anointed One." It evoked the ancient kings who were "anointed" with holy oil at the time of their enthronement. The Greek translation was *Christos*, from which is derived the word "Christ."

The Messiah was supposed to be a supernatural warrior and hero, a descendant of King David, who would be born in Bethlehem. It was widely believed that after a mighty battle, won with the help of heavenly armies, the Messiah would drive the Roman legions away from Judaea, and the Jews would live happily ever after in the kingdom of God.

Jesus accepted a form of this belief, for he announced that the kingdom of God was about to begin. At the same time, he never spoke against Rome, and he asked his followers to love their enemies. He attacked the Jewish priests and he said that the Temple of Jerusalem would be destroyed. Denounced to the Roman authorities as a political agitator, he was arrested by Roman soldiers on the day before Passover. Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, had him executed with two common criminals.

These are the bare facts which modern historians are able to affirm. The crucifixion of Jesus, on a spring day in A.D. 29 or 30, normally should have marked the end of a trivial incident in one remote province of the empire. But it did not. A few weeks later, the followers of Jesus rallied in the faith of his presence as that of the Lord, the Son of God, risen from the dead.

A NEW PRESENCE

The birth of Christianity is an historical event which is related to the influence of Jesus over a handful of friends. As a spiritual

descendant of the prophets of Israel, Jesus understood that the Jewish law and ritual had become, on the one hand, a source of high standards for morality among men and, on the other hand, a cause for hypocrisy, religious pride, and racial arrogance. It was he who exploded the clannishness of Judaism by restoring the humaneness of the Law. He saw that "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27). He also discovered that non-Jews could be responsible and noble human beings. He therefore announced that many would come from the extremities of the earth to the celestial banquet with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Matthew 8:11).

The influence of Jesus over his friends, however, went far beyond his words. Through the mysterious quality of his person, he communicated to them the immediate presence of a compassionate God, whose dealings with men lie in the secret of forgiveness and love. His death in torture could not shatter this sense of presence. Although killed by men, the person of Jesus lived in his followers, associated in their spirits with the full holiness of divinity.

It was this presence which elevated them from cowardice to heroism. One day, they had scattered like scared rabbits; the next, they faced death with courage and even serenity. Historians are not able to discern what happened, but there is no possibility of doubting that faith in the resurrection of Jesus represents the only explanation of that historical event: the birth of Christianity.

A NEW PEOPLE

Soon, the first Christians, who were originally all Jewish, convinced other people of their faith. Their new mode of life spread throughout Syria, Cyprus, Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece. It finally reached Rome itself, the capital of the world. Many non-Jews ("gentiles") were converted to the new faith.

The members of the new movement belonged to various races, nations, and walks of life. Many of them were hardworking tradesmen, making their living in such commercial centers of the empire as Antioch, Ephesus, and Corinth. Others were slaves, the sons and daughters of former prisoners of war. A few were well-to-do Roman citizens who occupied high positions in Roman society. All of them, disparate as they were, sensed that they belonged to a new people. They forgot their differences as they became united for the coming of their Lord at the end of history.

A NEW WORD

From the start, the followers of the Risen Christ expressed their new faith into words. At first, they adopted the Jewish custom of meeting together for the Sabbath (Saturday). Soon, they gathered "on the first day of the week" (Sunday), in honor of the day of the resurrection of Christ. During those meetings, they celebrated the Lord's supper, prayed, sang the Psalms, and read the Hebrew scriptures in the Greek translation (later known as "the Old Testament"). They also repeated their own memories of the death of Jesus, the stories he had told, the advice he had given, and the acts of healing he had performed. The Christians of the first century, who had come from many diverse groups, were molded by *a new presence* into *a new people* and recited among themselves *a new word*.

Moreover, some of their leaders—Paul, Peter, and others, traveled a great deal from community to community across the Empire. Absent from his friends, Paul wrote them letters. These were read aloud, reread, copied, passed around, and treasured. The stories of Jesus together with the letters of Paul formed the nucleus of the New Testament.

PART 1



The Stories of Jesus

For about thirty years after the beginning of the Christian church, there was no need to write down the story of Jesus. The first Christians lived in the hope that they would not die before the return of their Lord (Acts 3:19; I Corinthians 1:7-8; 15:51, I Thessalonians 4:17; etc.). In the meantime, they rejoiced in their faith and sang the story of Jesus as "good news." The English words "evangel" and, through Old English, "gospel" ["God's Spell"] are derived from the Greek word *evangelion*, "good news" ("good tidings," Isaiah 40:9; Luke 2:10; Romans 10:15).

THE RISE OF THE ORAL TRADITION

The story of the trial and death of Jesus was first told publicly by Peter (Acts 2:23; 4:27). Other disciples repeated what they had seen and heard, and their words were learned by heart. The Christian communities sang them at the celebration of their common meals on the Lord's Day. Soon, an oral and musical tradition developed, initially in Aramaic, language of the Jews of Judaea. Later, the Aramaic traditions were translated into Greek, when the church reached the Jews of Cyprus and Asia Minor, and especially the Greek-speaking non-Jews who were converted to the new faith.

THE WRITING OF THE GOSPELS

When the disciples who had known Jesus began to grow old and die, it became important to preserve their memories in writing. The earliest gospel was composed by Mark in about A.D. 60 or 62. Then followed the gospel of Matthew, in about 75, and that of Luke a little later, between 75 and 85. The gospel of John came to light still later, in about 95. Although written in Greek, the gospels did not look at all like the books of the Greek historians. Their purpose was not historical but religious. "These have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, you may have life in his name" (John 20:31).

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

Even after a superficial reading, it appears that the fourth gospel, in its style and content, is quite different from the others. The fourth gospel will be studied later with other writings which bear the name "John."

The first three gospels form a group, since they contain much of the same material, and their parallelism allows scholars to arrange them in three lateral columns. This process facilitates their comparison at a glance. For this reason, they are known as the "synoptic" gospels (from the Greek word *synopsis*, "view of the whole").

The following example shows the synopsis of a short passage.

MATTHEW 19:16-17

And behold one came up to him saying, "Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life?" And he said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? One there is who is good."

MARK 10:17-18

And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone."

LUKE 18:18

And a ruler asked him, "Good teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone."

Is it possible to explain why some words, scenes, and details are common to all three of the synoptics, and also to find the reasons for their differences and contradictions? Whole sections appear in only two gospels, or sometimes in only one of the three. Are the synoptics independent of one another, or are they related?

After several centuries of discussion, most scholars today believe that (1) Mark is the earliest of the three; (2) Matthew and Luke used Mark, either in its present and final form, or in a slightly earlier form known as "Proto-Mark"; (3) both Matthew and Luke used, in addition to Mark, a special source, probably unknown to Mark and today called "Q" (from the German word *Quelle*, "source"); (4) Matthew and Luke also used their own respective sources of information—special documents or at least oral traditions, some in Greek, still others in Aramaic, designated as "M" (for those of Matthew) and "L" (for those of Luke).

These results of painstaking scrutiny and long debate are important, for they show that although the synoptic gospels were written more than thirty or forty years after the events which they describe, they were based on older elements of information which originated with the eyewitnesses themselves (Luke 1:1-4).

Chapter 1



MARK

The author of the earliest gospel may have been the youth wearing nothing but a linen cloth around his body who was present at the arrest of Jesus. The soldiers seized him but, as the text puts it, "he left the linen cloth and ran away naked" (Mark 14: 51-52). Scholars have argued that this detail, strangely superfluous in the story of the arrest of Jesus, is found only in the gospel according to Mark. We may have here the author's vested signature.

THE TRADITION CONCERNING MARK

If the author of the earliest gospel is to be identified with a man called John-Mark, whose mother had a house in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12), we conclude that he was associated with the apostles from the first years of the church (Acts 12:25; 13:5, 13; 15:36-39). Later on, he became assistant to Paul and to Peter in Rome (II Timothy 4:11; I Peter 5:13).

According to the fourth-century historian Eusebius, a certain bishop of the second century, Papias, believed that "Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately all that he remembered of the things done and said by Christ. . . ." Many special features of the Marcan gospel seem to confirm this tradition, for they reflect the vivid touch of an eyewitness. Among the gospel writers, Mark alone preserved concrete and picturesque details, such as the grieved glance of Jesus (3:5), the "pillow" on which Jesus slept (4:38), the "green grass" on which the crowd

sat "like banquet guests," and aligned themselves in rows "like garden beds" (6:39, 40).

Mark also respected the Aramaic dialect of some of the words spoken by Jesus, such as "Talitha Qumi [*Little girl, (I say to you,) arise!*]" to the daughter of Jairus (5:41), "Ephphatha [*Be opened!*]" to a deaf and mute man (7:34).

The writer may have wanted to transmit to the readers some of the vocal inflexion, with its accent of tenderness, as it was still ringing in the ears of the aged Peter.

THE PLAN OF THE GOSPEL OF MARK

According to Eusebius, Papias asserted that Mark wrote "accurately . . . but not in order." This is true in the sense that many of the events and sayings have not been recorded in a chronological sequence, but the remark of Papias should not be interpreted to mean that Mark wrote at random, without plan. On the contrary, his gospel falls naturally into four main parts: (1) the Galilean ministry of Jesus, centered around the town of Capernaum and dominated by the preaching to large crowds on the coming of the kingdom of God (1:13—8:26); (2) the traveling ministry of Jesus, inaugurated by Peter's confession, and centered on a teaching reserved for the disciples alone concerning the Son of Man (8:27—10:52); (3) the Jerusalem ministry of Jesus (11:1—13:37); and (4) the narratives of his passion, death and resurrection (14—16:8).

A short introduction opens the gospel with a notice on John the Baptist (1:1—12), and there was originally a conclusion which has been lost. The present ending (16:9—20), as shown by the study of the various manuscripts, was composed later by a certain Ariston with material taken from Matthew and Luke.

The earliest gospel was masterfully conceived as the unfolding of a drama. It showed the conjunction of psychological, religious, and political forces—which together led to the arrest and execution.

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

The Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begins with the fulfillment of this prophecy of Isaiah—

Behold, I send my messenger before thy face,
Who shall prepare thy way;
The voice of one crying in the wilderness,
Make ye ready the way of the Lord,
Make his paths straight.

For John came and began to baptize men in the desert, proclaiming baptism as the mark of a complete change of heart and of the forgiveness of sins. All the people of the Judæan countryside and everyone in Jerusalem went out to him in the desert and received his baptism in the river Jordan, publicly confessing their sins.

John himself was dressed in camel's hair, with a leather belt round his waist, and he lived on locusts and wild honey. The burden of his preaching was, "There is someone coming after me who is stronger than I—indeed I am not good enough to kneel down and undo his shoes. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

1. 9 *The arrival of Jesus*

It was in those days that Jesus arrived from the Galilean village of Nazareth and was baptized by John in the Jordan. All at once, as he came up out of the water, he saw the heavens split open, and the Spirit coming down upon him like a dove. A voice came out of Heaven, saying,

"You are my dearly loved Son, in whom I am well pleased!"

Then the Spirit sent him out at once into the desert, and there he remained for forty days while Satan tempted him. During this time no one was with him but wild animals, and only the angels were there to care for him.

1. 14 *Jesus begins to preach the gospel, and to call men to follow him*

It was after John's arrest that Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, saying,

"The time has come at last—the kingdom of God has arrived. You must change your hearts and minds and believe the good news."

As he walked along the shore of the Lake of Galilee, he saw two fishermen, Simon and his brother Andrew, casting their nets into the water.

"Come and follow me, and I will teach you to catch men!" he cried.

At once they dropped their nets, and followed him.

Then he went a little further along the shore and saw James the son of Zebedee, aboard a boat with his brother John, overhauling their nets. At once he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and went off after him.

1. 21 Jesus begins healing the sick

They arrived at Capernaum, and on the Sabbath day Jesus walked straight into the synagogue and began teaching. They were amazed at his way of teaching, for he taught with the ring of authority—quite unlike the scribes. All at once, a man in the grip of an evil spirit appeared in the synagogue shouting out:

"What have you got to do with us, Jesus from Nazareth? Have you come to kill us? I know who you are—you're God's holy one!"

But Jesus cut him short and spoke sharply: "Hold your tongue and get out of him!"

At this the evil spirit convulsed the man, let out a loud scream and left him. Everyone present was so astounded that people kept saying to each other:

"What on earth has happened? This new teaching has authority behind it. Why, he even gives his orders to evil spirits and they obey him!"

And his reputation spread like wildfire through the whole Galilean district.

Then he got up and went straight from the synagogue to the house of Simon and Andrew, accompanied by James and John. Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a high fever, and they lost no time in telling Jesus about her. He went up to her, took her hand and helped her to her feet. The fever left her, and she began to see to their needs.

Late that evening, after sunset, they kept bringing to him all who were sick or troubled by evil spirits. The whole population of the town gathered round the doorway. And he healed great num-

bers of people who were suffering from various forms of disease. In many cases he expelled evil spirits; but he would not allow them to say a word, for they knew perfectly well who he was.

1. 35 He retires for private prayer

Then, in the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a deserted place, and there he prayed. Simon and his companions went in search of him, and when they found him, they said,

"Everyone is looking for you."

"Then we will go somewhere else, to the neighboring towns," he replied, "so that I may give my message there too—that is why I have come."

So he continued preaching in their synagogues and expelling evil spirits throughout the whole of Galilee.

1. 40 Jesus cures leprosy

Then a leper came to Jesus, kneeled in front of him and appealed to him,

"If you want to, you can make me clean."

Jesus was filled with pity for him, and stretched out his hand and placed it on the leper, saying,

"Of course I want to—*be clean!*"

At once the leprosy left him and he was quite clean. Jesus sent him away there and then with the strict injunction:

"Mind you say nothing at all to anybody. Go straight off and show yourself to the priest, and make the offerings for your cleansing which Moses prescribed, as public proof of your recovery."

But he went off and began to talk a great deal about it in public, spreading his story far and wide. Consequently, it became impossible for Jesus to show his face in the towns and he had to stay outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from all quarters.

2. 1 Faith at Capernaum

When he re-entered Capernaum some days later, a rumor spread that he was in somebody's house. Such a large crowd collected that while he was giving them his message it was impossible even to get near the doorway. Meanwhile, a group of people arrived to see him, bringing with them a paralytic whom four of them were carrying. And when they found it was impossible to get near him because of the crowd, they removed the tiles from the roof over Jesus' head and let down the paralytic's bed through the opening. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the man on the bed,

"My son, your sins are forgiven."

But some of the scribes were sitting there silently asking themselves,

"Why does this man talk such blasphemy? Who can possibly forgive sins but God?"

Jesus realized instantly what they were thinking, and said to them,

"Why must you argue like this in your minds? Which do you suppose is easier—to say to a paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or 'Get up, pick up your bed and walk'? But to prove to you that the Son of Man has full authority to forgive sins on earth, I say to you,"—and here he spoke to the paralytic—"Get up, pick up your bed and go home."

At once the man sprang to his feet, picked up his bed and walked off in full view of them all. Everyone was amazed, praised God and said,

"We have never seen anything like this before."

Then Jesus went out again by the lakeside and the whole crowd came to him, and he continued to teach them.

2. 14 *Jesus now calls "a sinner" to follow him*

As Jesus went on his way, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at his desk in the tax office, and he said to him,

"Follow me!"

Levi got up and followed him. Later, when Jesus was sitting at dinner in Levi's house, a large number of tax collectors and disreputable folk came in and joined him and his disciples. For there were many such people among his followers. When the scribes and Pharisees saw him eating in the company of tax collectors and outsiders, they remarked to his disciples,

"Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

When Jesus heard this, he said to them,

"It is not the fit and flourishing who need the doctor, but those who are ill. I did not come to invite the 'righteous,' but the 'sinners.' "

2. 18 *The question of fasting*

The disciples of John and those of the Pharisees were fasting. They came and said to Jesus,

"Why do those who follow John or the Pharisees keep fasts but your disciples do nothing of the kind?"

Jesus told them,

"Can you expect wedding guests to fast in the bridegroom's presence? Fasting is out of the question as long as they have the bridegroom with them. But the day will come when the bride-

groom will be taken away from them—that will be the time for them to fast.”

“Nobody,” he continued, “sews a patch of unshrunk cloth onto an old coat. If he does, the new patch tears away from the old and the hole is worse than ever. And nobody puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine bursts the skins, the wine is spilled and the skins are ruined. No, new wine must go into new wineskins.”

2. 23 *Jesus rebukes the sabbatarians*

One day he happened to be going through the cornfields on the Sabbath day. And his disciples, as they made their way along, began to pick the ears of corn. The Pharisees said to him,

“Look at that! Why should they do what is forbidden on the Sabbath day?”

Then he spoke to them:

“Have you never read what David did, when he and his companions were hungry? Haven’t you read how he went into the house of God when Abiathar was High Priest, and ate the presentation loaves, which nobody is allowed to eat, except the priests—and gave some of the bread to his companions? The Sabbath,” he continued, “was made for man’s sake; man was not made for the sake of the Sabbath. That is why the Son of Man is master even of the Sabbath.”

On another occasion when he went into the synagogue, there was a man there whose hand was shriveled, and they were watching Jesus closely to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath day, so that they might bring a charge against him. Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand,

“Stand up and come out here in front!”

Then he said to them,

“Is it right to do good on the Sabbath day, or to do harm? Is it right to save life or to kill?”

There was a dead silence. Then Jesus, deeply hurt as he sensed their inhumanity, looked round in anger at the faces surrounding him, and said to the man,

“Stretch out your hand!”

And he stretched it out, and the hand was restored as sound as the other one. The Pharisees walked straight out and discussed with Herod’s party how they could have Jesus put out of the way.

3. 7 *Jesus’ enormous popularity*

Jesus now retired to the lakeside with his disciples. A huge crowd of people followed him, not only from Galilee, but from Judaea, Jerusalem and Idumaea, some from the district beyond

the Jordan and from the neighborhood of Tyre and Sidon. This vast crowd came to him because they had heard about the sort of thing he was doing. So Jesus told his disciples to have a small boat kept in readiness for him, in case the people should crowd him too closely. For he healed so many people that all those who were in pain kept pressing forward to touch him with their hands. Evil spirits, as soon as they saw him, acknowledged his authority and screamed,

“You are the Son of God!”

But he warned them repeatedly that they must not make him known.

3. 13 *Jesus chooses the twelve apostles*

Later he went up onto the hillside and summoned the men whom he wanted, and they went up to him. He appointed a band of twelve to be his companions, whom he could send out to preach, with power to drive out evil spirits. These were the twelve he appointed:

Peter (which was the new name he gave Simon), James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother (who were given the name Boanerges, which means the “Thunderers”), Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the patriot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

3. 20 *Jesus exposes an absurd accusation*

Then he went indoors, but again such a crowd collected that it was impossible for them even to eat a meal. When his relatives heard of this, they set out to take charge of him, for people were saying, “He must be mad!”

The scribes who had come down from Jerusalem were saying that he was possessed by Beelzebub, and that he drove out devils because he was in league with the prince of devils. So Jesus called them to him and spoke to them in a parable—

“How can Satan be the one who drives out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, then that kingdom cannot last, and if a household is divided against itself, it cannot last either. And if Satan leads a rebellion against Satan—his days are certainly numbered. No one can break into a strong man’s house and steal his property, without first tying up the strong man hand and foot. But if he did that, he could ransack the whole house.

“Believe me, all men’s sins can be forgiven and all their blasphemies. But there can never be any forgiveness for blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. That is an eternal sin.”

He said this because they were saying, "He is in the power of an evil spirit."

3. 31 *The new relationships in the kingdom*

Then his mother and his brothers arrived. They stood outside the house and sent a message asking him to come out to them. There was a crowd sitting round him when the message was brought telling him, "Your mother and your brothers are outside looking for you."

Jesus replied, "And who are really my mother and my brothers?"

And he looked round at the faces of those sitting in a circle about him.

"Look!" he said, "my mother and my brothers are here. Anyone who does the will of God is brother and sister and mother to me."



5. 21 *Faith is followed by healing*

When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side of the lake, a great crowd collected around him as he stood on the shore. Then came a man called Jairus, one of the synagogue presidents. And when he saw Jesus, he kneeled before him, pleading desperately for his help.

"My little girl is dying," he said. "Will you come and put your hands on her—then she will get better and live."

Jesus went off with him, followed by a large crowd jostling at his elbow. Among them was a woman who had had a hemorrhage for twelve years and who had gone through a great deal at the hands of many doctors, spending all her money in the process. She had derived no benefit from them but, on the contrary, was getting worse. This woman had heard about Jesus and came up behind him under cover of the crowd, and touched his cloak.

"For if I can only touch his clothes," she kept saying, "I shall be all right."

The hemorrhage stopped immediately, and she knew in herself that she was cured of her trouble. At once Jesus knew intuitively that power had gone out of him, and he turned round in the middle of the crowd and said,

"Who touched my clothes?"

His disciples replied,

"You can see this crowd jostling you. How can you ask, 'Who touched me?' "

But he looked all round at their faces to see who had done so. Then the woman, scared and shaking all over because she knew

that she was the one to whom this thing had happened, came and flung herself before him and told him the whole story. But he said to her,

"Daughter, it is your faith that has healed you. Go home in peace, and be free from your trouble."

While he was still speaking, messengers arrived from the synagogue president's house, saying,

"Your daughter is dead—there is no need to bother the master any further."

But when Jesus heard this, he said,

"Now, don't be afraid, just go on believing!"

Then he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John, James' brother. They arrived at the president's house and Jesus noticed the hubbub and all the weeping and wailing, and as he went in, he said to the people in the house,

"Why are you making such a noise with your crying? The child is not dead; she is fast asleep."

They greeted this with a scornful laugh. But Jesus turned them all out and, taking only the father and mother and his own companions with him, went into the room where the child was. Then he took the little girl's hand and said to her in Aramaic,

"Little girl, I tell you to get up!"

At once she jumped to her feet and walked round the room, for she was twelve years old. This sight sent the others nearly out of their minds with joy. But Jesus gave them strict instructions not to let anyone know what had happened—and ordered food to be given to the little girl.

6. I *The "prophet without honor"*

Then he left that district and came into his own native town, followed by his disciples. When the Sabbath day came, he began to teach in the synagogue. The congregation were astonished, and remarked:

"Where does he get all this? What is this wisdom that he has been given—and what about these marvelous things that he can do? He's only the carpenter, Mary's son, the brother of James, Joses, Judas and Simon; and his sisters are living here with us!"

And they were deeply offended with him. But Jesus said to them,

"No prophet goes unhonored—except in his native town or with his own relations or in his own home!"

And he could do nothing miraculous there apart from laying his hands on a few sick people and healing them; their lack of faith astonished him.

6. 6b *The twelve are sent out to preach the gospel*

Then he made his way round the villages, continuing his teaching. He summoned the twelve, and began to send them out in twos, giving them power over evil spirits. He instructed them to take nothing for the road except a staff—no satchel, no bread and no money in their pockets. They were to wear sandals and not to take more than one coat. And he told them:

“Wherever you are, when you go into a house, stay there until you leave that place. And wherever people will not welcome you or listen to what you have to say, leave them and shake the dust off your feet as a protest against them!”

So they went out and preached that men should change their whole outlook. They expelled many evil spirits and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.

6. 14 *Herod's guilty conscience*

All this came to the ears of king Herod, for Jesus' reputation was spreading, and people were saying that John the Baptist had risen from the dead, and that was why he was showing such miraculous powers. Others maintained that he was Elijah, and others that he was one of the prophets of the old days come back again. But when Herod heard all of this, he said,

“It must be John whom I beheaded, risen from the dead!”

For Herod himself had sent for and arrested John and had him bound in prison, all on account of Herodias, wife of his brother Philip. He had married her, though John used to say to Herod, “It is not right for you to possess your own brother's wife.” Herodias herself was furious with him for this and wanted to have him executed, but she could not do it, for Herod had a deep respect for John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and protected him. He used to listen to him and be profoundly disturbed, and yet he enjoyed hearing him.

Then a good opportunity came, for Herod gave a birthday party for his courtiers and army commanders and for the leading people in Galilee. Herodias' daughter came in and danced, to the great delight of Herod and his guests. The king said to the girl,

“Ask me anything you like and I will give it to you!”

And he swore to her,

“I will give you whatever you ask me, up to half of my kingdom!”

And she went out and spoke to her mother:

“What shall I ask for?”

And she said,

"The head of John the Baptist!"

The girl rushed back to the king's presence, and made her request.

"I want you to give me, this minute, the head of John the Baptist on a dish!" she said.

Herod was aghast, but because of his oath and the presence of his guests he did not like to refuse her. So he sent one of the palace guardsmen straightaway to bring him John's head. He went off and beheaded him in the prison, brought back his head on the dish, and gave it to the girl, who handed it to her mother. When his disciples heard what had happened, they came and took away the body and put it in a tomb.

6. 30 The apostles return: the huge crowds make rest impossible

The apostles returned to Jesus and reported to him every detail of what they had done and taught.

"Now come along to some quiet place by yourselves, and rest for a little while," said Jesus, for there were people coming and going incessantly so that they had not even time for meals. They went off in the boat to a quiet place by themselves, but a great many saw them go and recognized them, and people from all the towns hurried around the shore on foot to forestall them. When Jesus disembarked he saw the large crowd and his heart was touched with pity for them because they seemed to him like sheep without a shepherd. And he settled down to teach them about many things. As the day wore on, his disciples came to him and said:

"We are right in the wilds here and it is getting late. Let them go now, so that they can buy themselves something to eat from the farms and villages around here."

But Jesus replied,

"You give them something to eat!"

"You mean we're to go and spend ten dollars on bread? Is that how you want us to feed them?"

"What bread have you got?" asked Jesus. "Go and have a look."

And when they had found out, they told him,

"We have five loaves and two fish."

6. 39 Jesus miraculously feeds five thousand people

Then Jesus directed the people to sit down in parties on the fresh grass. And they threw themselves down in groups of fifty and a hundred. Then Jesus took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to Heaven, thanked God, broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to distribute to the people. And he divided the two fish among them all. Everybody ate and was satisfied. After-

ward they collected twelve baskets full of pieces of bread and fish that were left over. There were five thousand men who ate the loaves.



7. 24 *The faith of a gentile is rewarded*

Then he got up and left that place and went off to the neighborhood of Tyre. There he went into a house and wanted no one to know where he was. But it proved impossible to remain hidden. For no sooner had he got there, than a woman who had heard about him, and who had a daughter possessed by an evil spirit, arrived and prostrated herself before him. She was a Greek, a Syrophoenician by birth, and she asked him to drive the evil spirit out of her daughter. Jesus said to her,

"You must let the children have all they want first. It is not right, you know, to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs."

But she replied,

"Yes, Lord, I know, but even the dogs under the table eat what the children leave."

"If you can answer like that," Jesus said to her, "you can go home! The evil spirit has left your daughter."

And she went back to her home and found the child lying quietly on her bed, and the evil spirit gone.

7. 31 *Jesus restores speech and hearing*

Once more Jesus left the neighborhood of Tyre and passed through Sidon toward the lake of Galilee, and crossed the Ten towns territory. They brought to him a man who was deaf and unable to speak intelligibly, and they implored him to put his hand upon him. Jesus took him away from the crowd by himself. He put his fingers in the man's ears and touched his tongue with his own saliva. Then, looking up to Heaven, he gave a deep sigh and said to him in Aramaic,

"Open!"

And his ears were opened and immediately whatever had tied his tongue came loose and he spoke quite plainly. Jesus gave instructions that they should tell no one about this happening, but the more he told them, the more they broadcast the news. People were absolutely amazed, and kept saying,

"How wonderfully he has done everything! He even makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak."



8. 22 *Jesus restores sight*

So they arrived at Bethsaida where a blind man was brought to him, with the earnest request that he should touch him. Jesus took the blind man's hand and led him outside the village. Then he moistened his eyes with saliva and putting his hands on him, asked, "Can you see at all?"

The man looked up and said,

"I can see people. They look like trees—only they are walking about."

Then Jesus put his hands on his eyes once more and his sight came into focus, and he recovered and saw everything sharp and clear. And Jesus sent him off to his own house with the words,

"Don't even go into the village."

8. 27 *Jesus' question: Peter's inspired answer*

Jesus then went away with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them,

"Who are men saying that I am?"

"John the Baptist," they answered. "But others say that you are Elijah or, some say, one of the prophets."

Then he asked them,

"But what about you—who do you say that I am?"

"You are Christ!" answered Peter.

Then Jesus impressed it upon them that they must not mention this to anyone.

8. 31 *Jesus speaks of the future and of the cost of discipleship*

And he began to teach them that it was inevitable that the Son of Man should go through much suffering and be utterly repudiated by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He told them all this quite bluntly.

This made Peter draw him to one side and take him to task about what he had said. But Jesus turned and faced his disciples and rebuked Peter.

"Out of my way, Satan!" he said. "Peter, you are not looking at things from God's point of view, but from man's!"

Then he called his disciples and the people around him, and said to them,

"If anyone wants to follow in my footsteps, he must give up all right to himself, take up his cross and follow me. The man who tries to save his life will lose it; it is the man who loses his life for my sake and the gospel's who will save it. What good can it do a man to gain the whole world at the price of his own soul? What

can a man offer to buy back his soul once he has lost it? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this unfaithful and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in the Father's glory with the holy angels around him."

9. 1 *Jesus foretells his glory*

Then he added,

"Believe me, there are some of you standing here who will know nothing of death until you have seen the kingdom of God coming in its power!"

Six days later, Jesus took Peter and James and John with him and led them high up on a hillside where they were entirely alone. His whole appearance changed before their eyes, while his clothes became white, dazzling white—whiter than any earthly bleaching could make them. Elijah and Moses appeared to the disciples and stood there in conversation with Jesus. Peter burst out to Jesus:

"Master, it is wonderful for us to be here! Shall we put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah?"

He really did not know what to say, for they were very frightened. Then came a cloud which overshadowed them and a voice spoke out of the cloud:

"This is my dearly loved Son. Listen to him!"

Then, quite suddenly they looked all round them and saw nobody at all with them but Jesus. And as they came down the hillside, he warned them not to tell anybody what they had seen till "the son of Man should have risen again from the dead." They treasured this remark and tried to puzzle out among themselves what "rising from the dead" could mean. Then they asked him this question:

"Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come before Christ?"

"It is quite true," he told them, "that Elijah does come first, and begins the restitution of all things. But what does the scripture say about the Son of Man? This: that he must go through much suffering and be treated with contempt! I tell you that not only has Elijah come already but they have done to him exactly what they wanted—just as the scripture says of him."

9. 14 *Jesus heals an epileptic boy*

Then as they rejoined the other disciples, they saw that they were surrounded by a large crowd and that some of the scribes were arguing with them. As soon as the people saw Jesus, they ran forward excitedly to welcome him.

"What is the trouble?" Jesus asked them.

A man from the crowd answered,

"Master, I brought my son to you because he has a dumb spirit.

Wherever he is, it gets hold of him, throws him down on the ground and there he foams at the mouth and grinds his teeth. It's simply wearing him out. I did speak to your disciples to get them to drive it out, but they hadn't the power to do it."

Jesus answered them:

"Oh, what a faithless people you are! How long must I be with you, how long must I put up with you? Bring him here to me."

So they brought the boy to him, and as soon as the spirit saw Jesus, it convulsed the boy, who fell to the ground and writhed there, foaming at the mouth.

"How long has he been like this?" Jesus asked the father.

"Ever since he was a child," he replied. "Again and again it has thrown him into the fire or into water to finish him off. But if you can do anything, please take pity on us and help us."

"If you can do anything!" retorted Jesus. "Everything is possible to the man who believes."

"I do believe," the boy's father burst out. "Help me to believe more!"

When Jesus noticed that a crowd was rapidly gathering, he spoke sharply to the evil spirit, with the words,

"I command you, deaf and dumb spirit, come out of this boy, and never go into him again!"

The spirit gave a loud scream and after a dreadful convulsion left him. The boy lay there like a corpse, so that most of the bystanders said, "He is dead."

But Jesus grasped his hands and lifted him up, and then he stood on his own feet. When he had gone home, Jesus' disciples asked him privately,

"Why were we unable to drive it out?"

"Nothing can drive out this kind of thing except prayer," replied Jesus.

9. 30 *Jesus privately warns his disciples of his own death*

Then they left that district and went straight through Galilee. Jesus kept this journey secret, for he was teaching his disciples that the Son of Man would be betrayed into the power of men, that they would kill him and that three days after his death he would rise again. But they were completely mystified by this saying, and were afraid to question him about it.

9. 33 *Jesus defines the new "greatness"*

So they came to Capernaum. And when they were indoors he asked them,

"What were you discussing as we came along?"

They were silent, for on the way they had been arguing about who should be the greatest. Jesus sat down and called the twelve, and said to them,

"If any man wants to be first, he must be last and servant of all."

Then he took a little child and stood him in front of them all, and putting his arms round him, said to them,

"Anyone who welcomes one little child like this for my sake is welcoming me. And the man who welcomes me is welcoming not only me but the one who sent me!"

Then John said to him,

"Master, we saw somebody driving out evil spirits in your name, and we stopped him, for he is not one who follows us."

But Jesus replied,

"You must not stop him. No one who exerts such power in my name would readily say anything against me. For the man who is not against us is on our side. In fact, I assure you that the man who gives you a mere drink of water in my name, because you are followers of mine, will most certainly be rewarded. And I tell you too, that the man who disturbs the faith of one of the humblest of those who believe in me would be better off if he were thrown into the sea with a great millstone hung round his neck!"

9. 43 *Entering the kingdom may mean painful sacrifice*

"Indeed, if it is your own hand that spoils your faith, you must cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than to keep both your hands and go to the rubbish heap. If your foot spoils your faith, you must cut it off. It is better for you to enter life on one foot than to keep both your feet and be thrown on to the rubbish heap. And if your eye leads you astray, pluck it out. It is better for you to go one-eyed into the kingdom of God than to keep both eyes and be thrown on to the rubbish heap, where decay never stops and the fire never goes out. For everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is a very good thing; but if it should lose its saltiness, what can you do to restore its flavor? You must have salt in yourselves, and live at peace with each other."

10. 1 *The divine purpose in marriage*

Then he got up and left Galilee and went off to the borders of Judaea and beyond the Jordan. Again great crowds assembled to meet him, and again, according to his custom, he taught them. Then some Pharisees arrived to ask him this test question:

"Is it right for a man to divorce his wife?"

Jesus replied by asking them,

"What has Moses commanded you to do?"

"Moses allows men to write a divorce notice and then to dismiss her," they said.

"Moses gave you that commandment," returned Jesus, "because you know so little of the meaning of love. But from the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female. *'For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the twain shall become one flesh.'* So that in body they are no longer two people but one. That is why man must never separate what God has joined together."

On reaching the house, his disciples questioned him again about this matter.

"Any man who divorces his wife and marries another woman," he told them, "commits adultery against his wife. And if she herself divorces her husband and marries someone else, she commits adultery."

10. 13 *He welcomes small children*

Then some people came to him bringing little children for him to touch. The disciples tried to discourage them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant and told them,

"You must let little children come to me—never stop them! For the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Indeed, I assure you that the man who does not accept the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

Then he took the children in his arms and laid his hands on them and blessed them.

10. 17 *Jesus shows the danger of riches*

As he began to take the road again, a man came running up and fell at his feet, and asked him,

"Good master, tell me, please, what must I do to be sure of eternal life?"

"I wonder why you call me good," returned Jesus. "No one is good—only God. You know the commandments, 'Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not cheat, Honor thy father and mother.'"

"Master," he replied, "I have carefully kept all these since I was quite young."

Jesus looked steadily at him, and his heart warmed toward him. Then he said,

"There is one thing you still want. Go and sell everything you have, give the money away to the poor—you will have riches in Heaven. And then come back and follow me."

At these words the man's face fell and he went away in deep

distress, for he was very rich. Then Jesus looked round at them all, and said to his disciples,

"How difficult it is for those who have great possessions to enter the kingdom of God!"

The disciples were staggered at these words, but Jesus continued:

"Children, you don't know how hard it can be to get into the kingdom of Heaven. Why, a camel could more easily squeeze through the eye of a needle than a rich man get into the kingdom of God."

At this their astonishment knew no bounds, and they said to one another,

"Then who can possibly be saved?"

Jesus looked straight at them and said,

"Humanly speaking it is impossible, but not with God. Everything is possible with God."

Then Peter burst out,

"But look, we have left everything and followed you!"

"I promise you," returned Jesus, "nobody leaves home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or property for my sake and the gospel's without getting back a hundred times over, now in this present life, homes and brothers and sisters, mothers and children and land—though not without persecution—and in the next world eternal life. But many who are first now will then be last, and the last now will then be first."

10. 32 *The last journey to Jerusalem begins*

They were now on their way going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus walked on ahead. The disciples were dismayed at this, and those who followed were afraid. Then once more he took the twelve aside and began to tell them what was going to happen to him.

"We are now going up to Jerusalem," he said, "as you can see. And the Son of Man will be betrayed into the power of the chief priests and scribes. They are going to condemn him to death and hand him over to pagans who will jeer at him and spit at him and flog him and kill him. But after three days he will rise again."

10. 35 *An ill-timed request*

Then Zebedee's two sons James and John approached him, saying,

"Master, we want you to grant us a special request."

"What do you want me to do for you?" answered Jesus.

"Give us permission to sit one on each side of you in the glory of your kingdom!"

"You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said to them.

"Can you drink the cup I have to drink? Can you go through the baptism I have to bear?"

"Yes, we can," they replied.

Then Jesus told them,

"You will indeed drink the cup I am drinking, and you will undergo the baptism which I have to bear! But as for sitting on either side of me, that is not for me to give—such places belong to those for whom they are intended."

When the other ten heard about this, they began to be highly indignant with James and John; so Jesus called them all to him, and said,

"You know that the so-called rulers in the heathen world lord it over them, and their great men have absolute power. But it must not be so among you. No, whoever among you wants to be great must become the servant of you all, and if he wants to be first among you he must be the slave of all men! For the Son of Man himself has not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life to set many others free."

Then they came to Jericho, and as he was leaving it accompanied by his disciples and a large crowd, Bartimaeus (that is, the son of Timaeus), a blind beggar, was sitting in his usual place by the side of the road. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to call out,

"Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me!"

Many of the people told him sharply to keep quiet, but he shouted all the more,

"Son of David, have pity on me!"

Jesus stood quite still and said,

"Call him here."

So they called the blind man, saying,

"It's all right now; get up, he's calling you!"

At this he threw off his coat, jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

"What do you want me to do for you?" he asked him.

"Oh, master, let me see again!"

"Go on your way then," returned Jesus, "your faith has healed you."

And he recovered his sight at once and followed Jesus along the road.

II. 1 *Jesus arranges for his entry into the city*

When they were approaching Jerusalem and had come to Bethphage and Bethany on the slopes of the Mount of Olives, he sent off two of his disciples with these instructions:

"Go into the village just ahead of you and as soon as you enter

it you will find a tethered colt on which no one has yet ridden. Untie it, and bring it here. If anybody asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' just say, 'The Lord needs it, and will send it back immediately.'"

So they went off and found the colt tethered by a doorway outside in the open street, and they untied it. Some of the bystanders did say, "What are you doing, untying this colt?" but they made the reply Jesus told them to make, and the men raised no objection. So they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their coats on its back, and he took his seat upon it.

Many of the people spread out their coats in his path as he rode along, and others put down straw which they had cut from the fields. The whole crowd, both those who were in front and those who were behind Jesus, shouted:

"God save him!—God bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord! God bless the coming kingdom of our father David! God save him from on high!"

Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the Temple and looked round on all that was going on. And then, since it was already late in the day, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

On the following day, when they had left Bethany, Jesus felt hungry. He noticed a fig tree in the distance covered with leaves, and he walked up to it to see if he could find any fruit on it. But when he got to it, he could find nothing but leaves, for it was not yet time for the figs. Then Jesus spoke to the tree:

"May nobody ever eat fruit from you!"

And the disciples heard him say it.

Then they came into Jerusalem, and Jesus went into the Temple and began to drive out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money-changers and the benches of the dove sellers, and he would not allow people to carry their water pots through the Temple. And he taught them and said,

"Doesn't the scripture say, '*My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations*'? But you have turned it into a thieves' kitchen!"

The chief priests and scribes heard him say this and tried to find a way of getting rid of him. But they were in fact afraid of him, for his teaching had captured the imagination of the people. And every evening he left the city.

11. 20 *Jesus talks of faith, prayer, and forgiveness*

One morning as they were walking along, they noticed that the fig tree had withered away to the roots. Peter remembered it, and said,

"Master, look, the fig tree that you cursed is all shriveled up!"

"Have faith in God," replied Jesus to them. "I tell you that if anyone should say to this hill, 'Get up and throw yourself into the sea,' and without any doubt in his heart believe that what he says will happen, then it *will* happen! That is why I tell you, whatever you pray about and ask for, believe that you have received it and it will be yours. And whenever you stand praying, you must forgive anything that you are holding against anyone else, and your Heavenly Father will forgive you *your* sins."

11. 27 *Jesus' authority is directly challenged*

So they came once more to Jerusalem, and while Jesus was walking in the Temple, the chief priests, elders, and scribes approached him, and asked,

"What authority have you for what you're doing? And who gave you permission to do these things?"

"I am going to ask you a question," replied Jesus, "and if you answer me I will tell you what authority I have for what I do. The baptism of John, now—did it come from Heaven or was it purely human? Tell me that."

At this they argued with one another, "If we say from Heaven, he will say, 'Then why didn't you believe in him?' but if we say it was purely human, well . . ." For they were frightened of the people, since all of them believed that John was a real prophet. So they answered Jesus,

"We do not know."

"Then I cannot tell you by what authority I do these things," returned Jesus.

12. 1 *Jesus tells a story, with a pointed application*

Then he began to talk to them in parables.

"A man once planted a vineyard," he said, "fenced it round, dug out the hole for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he let it out to some farm workers and went abroad. At the end of the season he sent a servant to the tenants to receive his share of the vintage. But they got hold of him, knocked him about and sent him off empty-handed. The owner tried again. He sent another servant to them, but this one they knocked on the head and generally insulted. Once again he sent them another servant, but him they murdered. He sent many others and some they beat up and some they murdered. He had one man left—his own son who was very dear to him. He sent him last of all to the tenants, saying to himself, 'They will surely respect my own son.' But they said to each other, 'This fellow is the future owner—come on, let's kill him, and the property will be ours!' So they got hold of him and murdered him, and threw his body out of the vineyard. What do you suppose

the owner of the vineyard is going to do? He will come and destroy the men who were working his vineyard and will hand it over to others. Have you never read this scripture—

The stone which the builders rejected,
The same was made the head of the corner;
This was from the Lord,
And it is marvelous in our eyes?"

Then they tried to get their hands on him, for they knew perfectly well that he had aimed this parable at them—but they were afraid of the people. So they left him and went away.



12. 41 *The poor widow's coins*

Then Jesus sat down opposite the Temple almsbox and watched the people putting their money into it. A great many rich people put in large sums. Then a poor widow came up and dropped in two little coins, worth together about a nickel. Jesus called his disciples to his side and said to them,

"Believe me, this poor widow has put in more than all the others. For they have all put in what they can easily afford, but she in her poverty who needs so much, has given away everything, her whole living!"

13. 1 *Jesus prophesies the ruin of the Temple*

Then as Jesus was leaving the Temple, one of his disciples said to him,

"Look, Master, what wonderful stonework, what a size these buildings are!"

Jesus replied,

"You see these great buildings? Not a single stone will be left standing on another; every one will be thrown down!"

Then while he was sitting on the slope of the Mount of Olives facing the Temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew said to him privately,

"Tell us, when will these things happen? What sign will there be that all these things are going to be accomplished?"

So Jesus began to tell them:

"Be very careful that no one deceives you. Many are going to come in my name and say, 'I am he,' and will lead many astray. When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, don't be alarmed. Such things are bound to happen, but the end is not yet. Nation will take up arms against nation and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in different places and terrible famines.

But this is only the beginning of 'the pains.' You yourselves must keep your wits about you, for men will hand you over to their councils, and will beat you in their synagogues. You will have to stand in front of rulers and kings for my sake to bear your witness to them—for before the end comes the gospel must be proclaimed to all nations. But when they are taking you off to trial, do not worry beforehand about what you are going to say—simply say the words you are given when the time comes. For it is not really you who will speak, but the Holy Spirit.

13. 12 *Jesus foretells utter misery*

"A brother is going to betray his own brother to death, and a father his own child. Children will stand up against their parents and condemn them to death. There will come a time when the whole world will hate you because you are known as my followers. Yet the man who holds out to the end will be saved.

"But when you see 'the abomination of desolation' standing where it ought not (let the reader take note of this), then those who are in Judaea must fly to the hills! The man on his housetop must not go down nor go into his house to fetch anything out of it, the man in the field must not turn back to fetch his coat. Alas for the women who are pregnant at that time, and alas for those with babies at their breasts! Pray God that it may not be winter when that time comes, for there will be such utter misery in those days as has never been from the creation until now—and never will be again. Indeed, if the Lord did not shorten those days, no human being would survive. But for the sake of the people whom he has chosen he has shortened those days.

13. 21 *He warns against false christs, and commands vigilance*

"If anyone tells you at that time, 'Look, here is Christ,' or 'Look, there he is,' don't believe it! For false christs and false prophets will arise and will perform signs and wonders, to deceive, if it be possible, even the men of God's choice. You must keep your eyes open! I am giving you this warning before it happens.

"But when that misery is past, the light of the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give her light; stars will be falling from the sky and the powers of Heaven will rock on their foundations. Then men shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then shall he send out his angels to summon his chosen together from every quarter, from furthest earth to highest Heaven. Let the fig tree illustrate this for you: when its branches grow tender and produce leaves, you know that summer is near. So when you see these things happening, you may know that he is near, at your very doors! I tell you that this genera-

tion will not have passed until all these things have come true. Earth and sky will pass away, but what I have told you will never pass away! But no one knows the day or the hour of this happening, not even the angels in Heaven, no, not even the Son—only the Father. Keep your eyes open, keep on the alert, for you do not know when the time will be. It is as if a man who is traveling abroad had left his house and handed it over to be managed by his servants. He has given each one his work to do and has ordered the doorkeeper to be on the lookout for his return. Just so must you keep a lookout, for you do not know when the master of the house will come—it might be late evening, or midnight, or cock-crow, or early morning—otherwise he might come unexpectedly and find you sound asleep. What I am saying to you I am saying to all; keep on the alert!”

14. I *An act of love*

In two days' time the festival of the Passover and of unleavened bread was due. Consequently, the chief priests and the scribes were trying to think of some trick by which they could get Jesus into their power and have him executed.

“But it must not be during the festival,” they said, “or there will be a riot.”

Jesus himself was now in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper. As he was sitting at table, a woman approached him with an alabaster flask of very costly spikenard perfume. She broke the neck of the flask and poured the perfume on Jesus' head. Some of those present were highly indignant and muttered:

“What is the point of such wicked waste of perfume? It could have been sold for over thirty dollars and the money could have been given to the poor.” And there was a murmur of resentment against her. But Jesus said,

“Let her alone; why must you make her feel uncomfortable? She has done a beautiful thing for me. You have the poor with you always and you can do good to them whenever you like, but you will not always have me. She has done all she could—for she has anointed my body in preparation for burial. I assure you that wherever the gospel is preached throughout the whole world, this deed of hers will also be recounted, as her memorial to me.”

14. 10 *Judas volunteers to betray Jesus*

Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went off to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. And when they heard what he had to say, they were delighted and undertook to pay him for it. So he looked out for a convenient opportunity to betray him.

14. 12 The Passover-supper prepared

On the first day of unleavened bread, the day when the Passover was sacrificed, Jesus' disciples said,

"Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?"

Jesus sent off two of them with these instructions:

"Go into the town and you will meet a man carrying a pitcher of water. Follow him and say to the owner of the house to which he goes, 'The master says, where is the room for me to eat the Passover with my disciples?' And he will show you a large upstairs room all ready with the furnishings that we need. That is the place where you are to make our preparations."

So the disciples set off and went into the town, found everything as he had told them, and prepared for the Passover.

14. 17 The last supper together: the mysterious bread and wine

Late in the evening he arrived with the twelve. And while they were sitting there, right in the middle of the meal, Jesus remarked,

"Believe me, one of you is going to betray me—someone who is now having his supper with me."

This shocked and distressed them and one after another they began to say to him,

"Surely, I'm not the one?"

"It is one of the twelve," Jesus told them, "a man who is dipping his hand into the dish with me. It is true that the Son of Man will follow the road foretold by the scriptures, but alas for the man through whom he is betrayed! It would be better for that man if he had never been born."

And while they were still eating Jesus took a loaf, blessed it and broke it and gave it to them, with the words,

"Take this, it is my body."

Then he took a cup, and after thanking God, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it, and he said to them,

"This is my blood which is shed for many in the new agreement. I tell you truly I will drink no more wine until the day comes when I drink it fresh in the kingdom of God!"

Then they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives.

"Every one of you will lose your faith in me," Jesus told them, "as the scripture says:

I will smite the shepherd,

And the sheep shall be scattered abroad.

Yet after I have risen I shall go before you into Galilee!"

14. 29 *Peter's bold words—and Jesus' reply*

Then Peter said to him,

"Even if everyone should lose his faith, I never will."

"Believe me, Peter," returned Jesus, "this very night before the cock crows twice, you will disown me three times."

But Peter protested violently,

"Even if it means dying with you, I will never disown you!"

And they all made the same protest.

14. 32 *The last prayer in Gethsemane*

Then they arrived at a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples,

"Sit down here while I pray."

He took with him Peter, James and John, and began to be horror-stricken and desperately depressed.

"My heart is nearly breaking," he told them. "Stay here and keep watch for me."

Then he walked forward a little way and flung himself on the ground, praying that, if it were possible, he might not have to face the ordeal.

"Dear Father," he said, "all things are possible to you. Please—let me not have to drink this cup! Yet it is not what I want but what you want."

Then he came and found them fast asleep. He spoke to Peter:

"Are you asleep, Simon? Couldn't you manage to watch for a single hour? Watch and pray, all of you, that you may not have to face temptation. Your spirit is willing, but human nature is weak."

Then he went away again and prayed in the same words, and once more he came and found them asleep. They could not keep their eyes open and they did not know what to say for themselves. When he came back for the third time, he said,

"Are you still going to sleep and take your ease? All right—the moment has come; now you are going to see the Son of Man betrayed into the hands of evil men! Get up, let us be going! Look, here comes my betrayer!"

14. 43 *Judas betrays Jesus*

And indeed, while the words were still on his lips, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived with a mob armed with swords and staves, sent by the chief priests and scribes and elders. The betrayer had given them a sign; he had said: "The one I kiss will be the man. Get hold of him and you can take him away without any trouble." So he walked straight up to Jesus, cried, "Master!" and kissed him affectionately. And so they got hold of him and held him. Somebody

present drew his sword and struck at the High Priest's servant, slashing off his ear. Then Jesus spoke to them:

"So you've come out with your swords and staves to capture me like a bandit, have you? Day after day I was with you in the Temple, teaching, and you never laid a finger on me. But the scriptures must be fulfilled."

Then all the disciples deserted him and made their escape. There happened to be a young man among Jesus' followers who wore nothing but a linen shirt. They seized him, but he left the shirt in their hands and took to his heels stark naked.

14. 53 *Jesus before the High Priest*

So they marched Jesus away to the High Priest in whose presence all the chief priests and elders and scribes had assembled. (Peter followed him at a safe distance, right up to the High Priest's courtyard. There he sat in the firelight with the servants, keeping himself warm.) Meanwhile, the chief priests and the whole council were trying to find some evidence against Jesus which would warrant the death penalty. But they failed completely. There were plenty of people ready to give false testimony against him, but their evidence was contradictory. Then some more perjurers stood up and said,

"We heard him say, 'I will destroy this Temple that was built by human hands and in three days I will build another made without human aid.'"

But even so their evidence conflicted. So the High Priest himself got up and took the center of the floor.

"Have you no answer to make?" he asked Jesus. "What about all this evidence against you?"

But Jesus remained silent and offered no reply. Again the High Priest asked him,

"Are you Christ, Son of the blessed one?"

And Jesus said,

"I am! Yes, you will all see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, coming in the clouds of heaven."

Then the High Priest tore his robes and cried,

"Why do we still need witnesses? You heard the blasphemy; what is your opinion now?"

And their verdict was that he deserved to die. Then some of them began to spit at him. They blindfolded him and then slapped him, saying,

"Now prophesy who hit you!"

Even the servants who took him away slapped his face.

14. 66 *Peter, in fear, disowns his master*

In the meantime, while Peter was in the courtyard below, one of the High Priest's maids came and saw him warming himself. She looked closely at him, and said,

"You were with the Nazarene too—with Jesus!"

But he denied it, saying,

"I don't understand. I don't know what you're talking about."

And he walked out into the gateway, and a cock crew.

Again the maid who had noticed him began to say to the men standing there,

"This man is one of them!"

But he denied it again. A few minutes later the bystanders themselves said to Peter,

"You certainly are one of them. Why, you're a Galilean!"

But he started to curse and swear:

"I tell you I don't know the man you're talking about!"

Immediately the cock crew for the second time, and back into Peter's mind came the words of Jesus, "Before the cock crows twice, you will disown me three times."

And he broke down and wept.

15. 1 *Jesus before Pilate*

The moment daylight came the chief priests called together a meeting of elders, scribes, and members of the whole council, bound Jesus and took him off and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate asked him straight out,

"Well, you—*are* you the king of the Jews?"

"Yes, I am," he replied.

The chief priests brought many accusations. So Pilate questioned him again:

"Have you nothing to say? Listen to all their accusations!"

But Jesus made no further answer—to Pilate's astonishment.

Now it was Pilate's custom at festival time to release a prisoner—anyone they asked for. There was in the prison at the time, with some other rioters who had committed murder in a recent outbreak, a man called Barabbas. The crowd surged forward and began to demand that Pilate should do what he usually did for them. So he spoke to them:

"Do you want me to set free the king of the Jews for you?"

For he knew perfectly well that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him through sheer malice. But the chief priests worked upon the crowd to get them to demand Barabbas' release instead. So Pilate addressed them once more:

"Then what am I to do with the man whom you call the king of the Jews?"

They shouted back,

"Crucify him!"

But Pilate replied,

"Why, what crime has he committed?"

But their voices rose to a roar:

"Crucify him!"

And as Pilate wanted to satisfy the crowd, he set Barabbas free for them, and after having Jesus flogged handed him over to be crucified.

Then the soldiers marched him away inside the courtyard of the governor's residence and called their whole company together. They dressed Jesus in a purple robe, and twisting some thorn twigs into a crown, they put it on his head. Then they began to greet him,

"Hail, your majesty—king of the Jews!"

They hit him on the head with a stick and spat at him, and then bowed low before him on bended knee. And when they had finished their fun with him, they took off the purple cloak and dressed him again in his own clothes. Then they led him outside to crucify him. They compelled Simon, a native of Cyrene in Africa (the father of Alexander and Rufus), who was on his way from the fields at the time, to carry Jesus' cross.

15. 22 *The crucifixion*

They took him to a place called Golgotha (which means Skull Hill) and they offered him some drugged wine, but he would not take it. Then they crucified him, and shared out his garments, drawing lots to see what each of them would get. It was about nine o'clock in the morning when they nailed him to the cross. Over his head the placard of his crime read, "THE KING OF THE JEWS." They also crucified two bandits at the same time, one on each side of him. And the passers-by jeered at him, shaking their heads in mockery, saying,

"Hi, you! You could destroy the Temple and build it up again in three days, why not come down from the cross and save yourself?"

The chief priests also made fun of him among themselves and the scribes, and said,

"He saved others, he cannot save himself. If only this Christ, the king of Israel, would come down now from the cross, we should see it and believe!"

And even the men who were crucified with him hurled abuse at him.

At midday darkness spread over the whole countryside and lasted until three o'clock in the afternoon, and at three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice,

"My God, my God, why did you forsake me?"

Some of the bystanders heard these words which Jesus spoke in Aramaic (*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*), and said,

"Listen, he's calling for Elijah!"

One man ran off and soaked a sponge in vinegar, put it on a stick, and held it up for Jesus to drink, calling out,

"Let him alone! Let's see if Elijah will come and take him down!"

But Jesus let out a great cry, and died. The curtain of the Temple sanctuary was split in two from the top to the bottom. And when the centurion who stood in front of Jesus saw how he died, he said,

"This man was certainly a son of God!"

There were some women there looking on from a distance, among them Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of the younger James and Joses, and Salome. These were the women who used to follow Jesus as he went about in Galilee and look after him. And there were many other women there who had come up to Jerusalem with them.

15. 42 *The body of Jesus is reverently laid in a tomb*

When the evening came, because it was the day of preparation, that is the day before the Sabbath, Joseph from Arimathaea, a distinguished member of the council, who was himself prepared to accept the kingdom of God, went boldly into Pilate's presence and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate was surprised that he should be dead already and he sent for the centurion and asked whether he had been dead long. On hearing the centurion's report, he gave Joseph the body of Jesus. So Joseph brought a linen winding sheet, took Jesus down and wrapped him in it, and then put him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the solid rock, rolling a stone over the entrance to it. Mary of Magdala and Mary the mother of Joses were looking on and saw where he was laid.

16. 1 *Early on the first Lord's day: the women are amazed*

When the Sabbath was over, Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James, and Salome brought spices so that they could go and anoint him. And very early in the morning on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb, just as the sun was rising.

"Who is going to roll the stone back from the doorway of the tomb?" they asked each other.

And then as they looked closer, they saw that the stone, which

was a very large one, had been rolled back. So they went into the tomb and saw a young man in a white robe sitting on the right-hand side, and they were simply astonished. But he said to them,

"There is no need to be astonished. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. Look, here is the place where they laid him. But now go and tell his disciples, and Peter, that he will be in Galilee before you. You will see him there just as he told you."

And they got out of the tomb and ran away from it. They were trembling with excitement. They did not dare to breathe a word to anyone.

16. 9 *An ancient appendix*

When Jesus rose early on that first day of the week, he appeared first of all to Mary of Magdala, from whom he had driven out seven evil spirits. And she went and reported this to his sorrowing and weeping followers. They heard her say that he was alive and that she had seen him, but they did not believe it.

Later, he appeared in a different form to two of them who were out walking, as they were on their way to the country. These two came back and told the others, but they did not believe them either. Still later he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were sitting at table, and reproached them for their lack of faith and reluctance to believe those who had seen him after he had risen. Then he said to them,

"You must go out to the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature. He who believes it and is baptized will be saved, but he who disbelieves it will be condemned. These signs will follow those who do believe: they will drive out evil spirits in my name; they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up snakes, and if they drink anything poisonous it will do them no harm; they will lay their hands upon the sick and they will recover."

16. 19 *Jesus, his mission accomplished, returns to Heaven*

After these words to them, the Lord Jesus was taken up into Heaven and was enthroned at the right hand of God. They went out and preached everywhere. The Lord worked with them, confirming their message by the signs that followed.

Chapter 2



MATTHEW

THE SAYINGS OF JESUS

Modern scholars believe that the Document Q existed at a very early date. It consisted mainly of the sayings of Jesus which are today found in Matthew and Luke and are almost without parallel in Mark. Matthew and Luke wrote independently of each other, probably between the years 75 and 85. They both attempted to revise the gospel of Mark and they combined its edited substance with excerpts from the Document Q (see Introduction).

Strangely enough, they both followed the order of Mark whenever they edited him, but they never reproduced the material of the Document Q in the same sequence. For example, the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew are found in Luke scattered in various sections. The Document Q may have therefore circulated in different forms. Perhaps originally a textbook for the use of new converts, it emphasized the duties and privileges of discipleship, and showed an even greater interest than the Marcan gospel in the controversies which arose between Jesus and the Pharisees.

THE PLAN OF MATTHEW

It appears that Matthew reproduced the Document Q more faithfully than Luke did. Matthew framed most of the Q material in the Marcan story. At the same time, Matthew succeeded in arranging his own material in five themes:

1. Discipleship (3:1—7:28)

2. Apostleship (8:1—10:42)
3. Mystery of the Kingdom of God (11:1—13:53)
4. Churchmanship (13:54—18:35)
5. The Last Judgment (19:1—25:46).

These five sections are inserted between a prologue on the birth of Jesus, which is told with more interest in Joseph than in Mary (1:1—2:23), and the story of the trial, death, and resurrection (26:1—28:20).

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF MATTHEW

The author probably lived in Antioch, the capital of the province of Syria, among Christians who were chiefly of Jewish origin. He used a rabbinic style. For example, he preferred the expression "kingdom of Heaven," rather than "kingdom of God," in order to avoid the use of the divine name. He laid stress on the Jewishness of Jesus (1:1—17; 10:5; 23:2; etc.), and he portrayed Jesus as respecting the Law, ancient or new (5:18; etc.). He presented the Messiah as the supreme Teacher, appealing to those who were, in typically Jewish language, pursuing "righteousness" (5:6; compare Luke 6:21).

As he probably lived at a time when a feverish expectation of the end of the world was seizing the members of his community, he emphasized the declarations of Jesus on the last judgment. Tirelessly, he repeated the threats of punishment in hell, where there would be "weeping and the gnashing of teeth."

Alone among the gospel writers, Matthew bequeathed to posterity such literary gems as the parables of the ten virgins and of the sheep and the goats (25:1—12, 31—46). Above all, he attempted to show that Jesus in his life and words fulfilled the predictions of the Old Testament (2:15; compare Hosea 11:1; or 2:17; compare Jeremiah 21:15; etc.).

The author of the Matthean gospel probably used a collection of Old Testament texts which, according to Papias, had been composed in Hebrew by Matthew, the former employee of the tollhouse. It may have been to this fact that the book owes its traditional name, for the tax collector Levi is called Matthew only in the Matthean gospel (9:9; compare Mark 2:14 and Luke 5:27).

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

1. 18 *The birth of Jesus in human history*

The birth of Jesus Christ happened like this. When Mary was engaged to Joseph, just before their marriage, she was discovered to be pregnant—by the Holy Spirit. Whereupon Joseph, her future husband, who was a good man and did not want to see her disgraced, planned to break off the engagement quietly. But while he was turning the matter over in his mind an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife! What she has conceived is conceived through the Holy Spirit, and she will give birth to a son, whom you will call Jesus (‘the Savior’) for it is he who will save his people from their sins.”

All this happened to fulfill what the Lord has said through the prophet—

Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel. (“Immanuel” means “God with us.”)

When Joseph woke up he did what the angel had told him. He married Mary, but had no intercourse with her until she had given birth to a son. Then he gave him the name Jesus.

2. 1 *Herod, suspicious of the newborn king, takes vindictive precautions*

Jesus was born in Bethlehem, in Judaea, in the days when Herod was king of the province. Not long after his birth there arrived from the east a party of astrologers making for Jerusalem and inquiring as they went: “Where is the child born to be king of the Jews? For we saw his star in the east and we have come here to pay homage to him.”

When King Herod heard about this he was deeply perturbed, as indeed were all the other people living in Jerusalem. So he summoned all the Jewish scribes and chief priests together and asked them where “Christ” should be born. Their reply was: “In Bethlehem, in Judaea, for this is what the prophet wrote about the matter—

And thou Bethalem, land of Judah,
Art in no wise least among the princes of Judah:
For out of thee shall come forth a governor,
Which shall be shepherd of my people Israel."

Then Herod invited the wise men to meet him privately and found out from them the exact time when the star appeared. Then he sent them off to Bethlehem, saying, "When you get there, search for this little child with the utmost care. And when you have found him, come back and tell me—so that I may go and worship him too."

The wise men listened to the king and then went on their way to Bethlehem. And now the star, which they had seen in the east, went in front of them as they traveled until at last it shone immediately above the place where the little child lay. The sight of the star filled them with indescribable joy.

So they went into the house and saw the little child with his mother Mary. And they fell on their knees and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts—gold, incense, and myrrh.

Then, since they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by a different route.

But after they had gone the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said: "Get up now; take the little child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you. For Herod means to seek out the child and kill him."

So Joseph got up and, taking the child and his mother with him in the middle of the night, set off for Egypt, where he remained until Herod's death.

This again is a fulfillment of the Lord's word spoken through the prophet—

Out of Egypt did I call my son.

When Herod saw that he had been fooled by the wise men, he was furiously angry. He issued orders, and killed all the male children of two years and under in Bethlehem and the surrounding district—basing his calculation on his careful questioning of the wise men.



5. 1 *Jesus proclaims the new values of the kingdom*

When Jesus saw the vast crowds he went up the hillside, and after he had sat down his disciples came to him.

Then he began his teaching by saying to them,

"How happy are the humble-minded, for the kingdom of Heaven is theirs!

"How happy are those who know what sorrow means, for they will be given courage and comfort!

"Happy are those who claim nothing, for the whole earth will belong to them!

"Happy are those who are hungry and thirsty for goodness, for they will be fully satisfied!

"Happy are the merciful, for they will have mercy shown to them!

"Happy are the utterly sincere, for they will see God!

"Happy are those who make peace, for they will be known as sons of God!

"Happy are those who have suffered persecution for the cause of goodness, for the kingdom of Heaven is theirs!

"And what happiness will be yours when people blame you and ill-treat you and say all kinds of slanderous things against you for my sake! Be glad then, yes, be tremendously glad—for your reward in Heaven is magnificent. They persecuted the prophets before your time in exactly the same way.

"You are the earth's salt. But if the salt should become tasteless, what can make it salt again? It is completely useless and can only be thrown out of doors and stamped underfoot.

"You are the world's light—it is impossible to hide a town built on the top of a hill. Men do not light a lamp and put it under a bucket. They put it on a lampstand, and it gives light for everybody in the house.

"Let your light shine like that in the sight of men. Let them see the good things you do and praise your Father in Heaven.

5. 17 *Christ's authority surpasses that of the Law*

"You must not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to complete them. Indeed, I assure you that, while Heaven and earth last, the Law will not lose a single dot or comma until its purpose is complete. This means that whoever now relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men to do the same will himself be called least in the kingdom of Heaven. But whoever teaches and practices them will be called great in the kingdom of Heaven. For I tell you that your goodness must be a far better thing than the goodness of the scribes and Pharisees before you can set foot in the kingdom of Heaven at all!

"You have heard that it was said to the people in the old days, '*Thou shalt not murder*,' and anyone who does so must stand his trial. But I say to you that anyone who is angry with his brother

must stand his trial; anyone who contemptuously calls his brother a fool must face the supreme court; and anyone who looks down on his brother as a lost soul is himself heading straight for the fire of destruction.

“So that if, while you are offering your gift at the altar, you should remember that your brother has something against you, you must leave your gift there before the altar and go away. Make your peace with your brother first, then come and offer your gift. Come to terms quickly with your opponent while you have the chance, or else he may hand you over to the judge and the judge in turn hand you over to the officer of the court and you will be thrown into prison. Believe me, you will never get out again till you have paid your last farthing!

“You have heard that it was said to the people in the old days, ‘*Thou shalt not commit adultery.*’ But I say to you that every man who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her—in his heart.

“Yes, if your right eye leads you astray pluck it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than that your whole body should be thrown onto the rubbish heap.

“Yes, if your right hand leads you astray cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than that your whole body should go to the rubbish heap.

“It also used to be said that whoever divorces his wife must give her a proper certificate of divorce. But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife except on the ground of unfaithfulness is making her an adulteress. And whoever marries the woman who has been divorced also commits adultery.

“Again, you have heard that the people in the old days were told—‘*Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths*’; but I say to you, don’t use an oath at all. Don’t swear by Heaven for it is God’s throne; nor by the earth for it is his footstool; nor by Jerusalem for it is the city of the great king. No, and don’t swear by your own head, for you cannot make a single hair—white or black! Whatever you have to say let your ‘yes’ be a plain ‘yes’ and your ‘no’ be a plain ‘no’—anything more than this has a taint of evil.

“You have heard that it used to be said, ‘*An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,*’ but I tell you, don’t resist the man who wants to harm you. If a man hits your right cheek, turn the other one to him as well. If a man wants to sue you for your coat, let him have it and your overcoat as well. If anybody forces you to go a mile with him, do more—go two miles with him. Give to the man who asks anything from you, and don’t turn away from the man who wants to borrow.

"You have heard that it used to be said '*Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy*,' but I tell you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Heavenly Father. For he makes his sun rise upon evil men as well as good, and he sends his rain upon honest and dishonest men alike.

"For if you love only those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even tax collectors do that! And if you exchange greetings only with your own circle, are you doing anything exceptional? Even the pagans do that much. No, you are to be perfect, like your Heavenly Father.

6. 1 *The new life is not a matter of outward show*

"Beware of doing your good deeds conspicuously to catch men's eyes or you will miss the reward of your Heavenly Father.

"So, when you do good to other people, don't hire a trumpeter to go in front of you—like those play actors in the synagogues and streets who make sure that men admire them. Believe me, they have had all the reward they are going to get! No, when you give to charity, don't even let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be secret. Your Father who knows all secrets will reward you.

"And then, when you pray, don't be like the play actors. They love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at street corners so that people may see them at it. Believe me, they have had all the reward they are going to get! But when you pray, go into your own room, shut your door and pray to your Father privately. Your Father who sees all private things will reward you. And when you pray don't rattle off long prayers like the pagans who think they will be heard because they use so many words. Don't be like them. After all, God, who is your Father, knows your needs before you ask him. Pray then like this—

Our Heavenly Father, may your name be honored;
May your kingdom come, and your will be done on earth as
it is in Heaven.

Give us this day the bread we need,
Forgive us what we owe to you, as we have also forgiven those
who owe anything to us.

Keep us clear of temptation, and save us from evil.

6. 14 *Forgiveness of fellow man is essential*

"For if you forgive other people their failures, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you will not forgive other people, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive you your failures.

"Then, when you fast, don't look like those miserable play

actors! For they deliberately disfigure their faces so that people may see that they are fasting. Believe me, they have had all their reward. No, when you fast, brush your hair and wash your face so that nobody knows that you are fasting—let it be a secret between you and your Father. And your Father who knows all secrets will reward you.

6. 19 *Put your trust in God alone*

“Don’t pile up treasures on earth, where moth and rust can spoil them and thieves can break in and steal. But keep your treasure in Heaven where there is neither moth nor rust to spoil it and nobody can break in and steal. For wherever your treasure is, you may be certain that your heart will be there too!

“The lamp of the body is the eye. If your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is evil, your whole body will be full of darkness. If all the light you have is darkness, it is dark indeed!

“No one can be loyal to two masters. He is bound to hate one and love the other, or support one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and the power of money at the same time. That is why I say to you, don’t worry about living—wondering what you are going to eat or drink, or what you are going to wear. Surely life is more important than food, and the body more important than the clothes you wear. Look at the birds in the sky. They never sow nor reap nor store away in barns, and yet your Heavenly Father feeds them. Aren’t you much more valuable to him than they are? Can any of you, however much he worries, make himself an inch taller? And why do you worry about clothes? Consider how the wild flowers grow. They neither work nor weave, but I tell you that even Solomon in all his glory was never arrayed like one of these! Now if God so clothes the flowers of the field, which are alive today and burned in the stove tomorrow, is he not much more likely to clothe you, you ‘little-faiths’?

“So don’t worry and don’t keep saying, ‘What shall we eat, what shall we drink or what shall we wear?’ That is what pagans are always looking for; your Heavenly Father knows that you need them all. Set your heart on his kingdom and his goodness, and all these things will come to you as a matter of course.

“Don’t worry at all then about tomorrow. Tomorrow can take care of itself! One day’s trouble is enough for one day.

7. 1 *The common sense behind right behavior*

“Don’t criticize people, and you will not be criticized. For you will be judged by the way you criticize others, and the measure you give will be the measure you receive.

"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and fail to notice the plank in your own? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me get the speck out of your eye,' when there is a plank in your own? You fraud! Take the plank out of your own eye first, and then you can see clearly enough to remove your brother's speck of dust.

"You must not give holy things to dogs, nor must you throw your pearls before pigs—or they may trample them underfoot and turn and attack you.

"Ask and it will be given to you. Search and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened for you. The one who asks will always receive; the one who is searching will always find, and the door is opened to the man who knocks.

"If any of you were asked by his son for bread would you be likely to give him a stone, or if he asks for a fish would you give him a snake? If you then, for all your evil, quite naturally give good things to your children, how much more likely is it that your Heavenly Father will give good things to those who ask him?

"Treat other people exactly as you would like to be treated by them—this is the essence of all true religion.

"Go in by the narrow gate. For the wide gate has a broad road which leads to disaster, and there are many people going that way. The narrow gate and the hard road lead out into life, and only a few are finding it.

7. 15 *Living, not professing, is what matters*

"Be on your guard against false religious teachers, who come to you dressed up as sheep but are really greedy wolves. You can tell them by their fruit. Do you pick a bunch of grapes from a thornbush or figs from a clump of thistles? Every good tree produces good fruit, but a bad tree produces bad fruit. A good tree is incapable of producing bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot produce good fruit. The tree that fails to produce good fruit is cut down and burned. So you may know men by their fruit.

"It is not everyone who keeps saying to me 'Lord, Lord' who will enter the kingdom of Heaven, but the man who actually does my Heavenly Father's will.

"In 'that day' many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we preach in your name, didn't we cast out devils in your name, and do many great things in your name?' Then I shall tell them plainly: 'I have never known you. Go away from me; you have worked on the side of evil!'

7. 24 *To follow Christ's teaching means the only real security*

"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a sensible man who builds his house on the rock. Down came the rain and up came the floods, while the winds blew and roared upon that house—and it did not fall because its foundations were on the rock.

"And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not follow them can be compared with a foolish man who built his house on the sand. Down came the rain and up came the floods, while the winds blew and battered that house till it collapsed, and fell with a great crash."

When Jesus had finished these words the crowd were astonished at the power behind his teaching. For his words had the ring of authority, quite unlike those of their scribes.



12. 46 *Jesus and his relations*

While he was still talking to the crowds, his mother and his brothers happened to be standing outside wanting to speak to him. Somebody said to him, "Look, your mother and your brothers are outside wanting to speak to you." But Jesus replied to the one who told him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" Then with a gesture of his hand toward his disciples he went on: "There are my mother and brothers! For whoever does the will of my Heavenly Father is brother and sister and mother to me."

13. 1 *Jesus tells the parable of the seed*

It was on the same day that Jesus went out of the house and sat down by the lakeside. Such great crowds collected round him that he went aboard a small boat and sat down while all the people stood on the beach. He told them a great deal in parables, and began:

"There was once a man who went out to sow. In his sowing some of the seeds fell by the roadside and the birds swooped down and gobbled them up. Some fell on stony patches where they had very little soil. They sprang up quickly in the shallow soil, but when the sun came up they were scorched by the heat and withered away because they had no roots. Some seeds fell among thorn-bushes and the thorns grew up and choked the life out of them. But some fell on good soil and produced a crop—some a hundred times what had been sown, some sixty and some thirty times. The man who has ears to hear should use them!"

At this the disciples approached him and asked, "Why do you talk to them in parables?"

"Because you have been given the chance to understand the secrets of the kingdom of Heaven," replied Jesus, "but they have not. For when a man has something, more is given to him till he has plenty. But if he has nothing even his nothing will be taken away from him. This is why I speak to them in these parables; because they go through life with their eyes open, but see nothing; and with their ears open, but understand nothing of what they hear. They are the living fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy which says:

By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand;
And seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive:
For this people's heart is waxed gross,
And their ears are dull of hearing,
And their eyes they have closed;
Lest haply they should perceive with their eyes,
And hear with their ears,
And understand with their heart,
And should turn again,
And I should heal them.

"But how fortunate you are to have eyes that see and ears that hear! Believe me, a great many prophets and good men have longed to see what you are seeing and they never saw it. Yes, and they longed to hear what you are hearing and they never heard it.

"Now listen to the parable of the sower. When a man hears the message of the kingdom and does not grasp it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is like the seed sown by the roadside. The seed sown on the stony patches represents the man who hears the message and eagerly accepts it. But it has not taken root in him and does not last long—the moment trouble or persecution arises through the message he gives up his faith at once. The seed sown among the thorns represents the man who hears the message, and then the worries of this life and the illusions of wealth choke it to death and so it produces no 'crop' in his life. But the seed sown on good soil is the man who both hears and understands the message. His life shows a good crop, a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

13. 24 *Good and evil grow side by side in this present world*

Then he put another parable before them. "The kingdom of Heaven," he said, "is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while his men were asleep his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the crop came up and ripened, the weeds appeared as well. Then the owner's servants came up to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your

field? Where did all these weeds come from?" "Some blackguard has done this to spite me," he replied. "Do you want us then to go out and pull them all up?" said the servants. "No," he returned, "if you pull up the weeds now, you would pull up the wheat with them. Let them both grow together till the harvest. And at harvesttime I shall tell the reapers, 'Collect all the weeds first and tie them up in bundles ready to burn, but collect the wheat and store it in my barn.'"

13. 31 *The kingdom's power of growth, and widespread influence*

Then he put another parable before them: "The kingdom of Heaven is like a tiny grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. As a seed it is the smallest of them all, but it grows to be the biggest of all plants. It becomes a tree, big enough for birds to come and nest in its branches."

This is another of the parables he told them: "The kingdom of Heaven is like yeast, taken by a woman and put into three measures of flour until the whole lot had risen."

All these things Jesus spoke to the crowd in parables, and he did not speak to them at all without using parables—to fulfill the prophecy:

I will open my mouth in parables;
I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world.

13. 36 *Jesus again explains a parable to his disciples*

Later, he left the crowds and went indoors, where his disciples came and said, "Please explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field."

"The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man," replied Jesus. "The field is the whole world. The good seed? That is the sons of the kingdom, while the weeds are the sons of the evil one. The blackguard who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of this world. The reapers are angels.

"Just as weeds are gathered up and burned in the fire, so will it happen at the end of this world. The Son of Man will send out his angels and they will uproot from the kingdom everything that is spoiling it, and all those who live in defiance of its laws, and will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be tears and bitter regret. Then the good will shine out like the sun in their Father's kingdom. The man who has ears should use them!

13. 44 *More pictures of the kingdom of Heaven*

"Again, the kingdom of Heaven is like some treasure which has been buried in a field. A man finds it and buries it again, and goes

off overjoyed to sell all his possessions to buy himself that field.

"Or again, the kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. When he has found a single pearl of great value, he goes and sells all his possessions and buys it.

"Or the kingdom of Heaven is like a big net thrown into the sea collecting all kinds of fish. When it is full, the fishermen haul it ashore and sit down and pick out the good ones for the barrels, but they throw away the bad. That is how it will be at the end of this world. The angels will go out and pick out the wicked from among the good and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be tears and bitter regret.

"Have you grasped all this?"

"Yes," they replied.

"You can see, then," returned Jesus, "how every one who knows the Law and becomes a disciple of the kingdom of Heaven is like a householder who can produce from his store both the new and the old."

13. 53 *Jesus is not appreciated in his native town*

When Jesus had finished these parables he left the place, and came into his own country. Here he taught the people in their own synagogue, till in their amazement they said, "Where does this man get this wisdom and these powers? He's only the carpenter's son. Isn't Mary his mother, and aren't James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas his brothers? And aren't all his sisters living here with us? Where did he get all this?" And they were deeply offended with him.

But Jesus said to them, "No prophet goes unhonored except in his own country and in his own home!"

And he performed very few miracles there because of their lack of faith.



19. 27 *Jesus declares that sacrifice for the kingdom will be repaid*

Peter exclaimed: "Look, we have left everything and followed you. What is that going to be worth to us?"

"Believe me," said Jesus, "when I tell you that in the next world, when the Son of Man shall sit down on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones and become judges of the twelve tribes of Israel. Every man who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or land for my sake will receive it all back many times over, and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first now will be last then—and the last first!"

20. 1 *But God's generosity may appear unfair*

"For the kingdom of Heaven is like a farmer going out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. He agreed with them on a wage of a silver coin a day and sent them to work. About nine o'clock he went out and saw some others standing about in the market place with nothing to do. 'You go to the vineyard too,' he said to them, 'and I will pay you a fair wage.' And off they went. At about midday and again at about three o'clock in the afternoon he went out and did the same thing. Then about five o'clock he went out and found some others standing about. 'Why are you standing about here all day doing nothing?' he asked them. 'Because no one has employed us,' they replied. 'You go off into the vineyard as well, then,' he said.

"When evening came the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last and ending with the first.' So those who were engaged at five o'clock came up and each man received a silver coin. When the first to be employed came they reckoned they would get more, but they also received a silver coin a man. As they took their money they grumbled at the farmer and said, 'These last fellows have only put in one hour's work and you've treated them exactly the same as us who have gone through all the hard work and heat of the day!'

"But he replied to one of them: 'My friend, I'm not being unjust to you. Wasn't our agreement for a silver coin a day? Take your money and go home. It is my wish to give the latecomer as much as I give you. May I not do what I like with what belongs to me? Must you be jealous because I am generous?'

"So, many who are the last now will be first then and the first last."

22. 1 *The kingdom is not to be lightly disregarded*

Then Jesus began to talk to them again in parables.

"The kingdom of Heaven," he said, "is like a king who arranged a wedding for his son. He sent his servants to summon those who had been invited to the festivities, but they refused to come. Then he tried again; he sent some more servants, saying to them: 'Tell those who have been invited, "Here is my wedding breakfast all ready, my bullocks and fat cattle have been slaughtered and everything is prepared. Come along to the festivities."' But they took no notice to this and went off, one to his farm, and another to his business. As for the rest, they got hold of the servants, treated them

disgracefully, and finally killed them. At this the king was very angry and sent his troops and killed those murderers and burned down their city. Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast is quite ready, but those who were invited were not good enough for it. So go off now to all the street corners and invite everyone you find there to the feast.' So the servants went out onto the streets and collected together all those whom they found, bad and good alike. And the hall became filled with guests. But when the king came in to inspect the guests, he noticed among them a man not dressed for a wedding. 'How did you come in here, my friend,' he said to him, 'without being properly dressed for the wedding?' And the man had nothing to say. Then the king said to the ushers, 'Tie him up and throw him into the darkness outside. There he can weep and regret his folly!' For many are invited but few are chosen."



24. 45 *Vigilance is essential*

"Who then is the faithful and sensible servant, whom his master put in charge of his household to give the others their food at the proper time? Well, he is fortunate if his master finds him doing that duty on his return! Believe me, he will promote him to look after all his property. But if he should be a bad servant who says to himself, 'My master takes his time about returning,' and should begin to beat his fellow servants and eat and drink with drunkards, that servant's master will return suddenly and unexpectedly, and will punish him severely and send him off to share the penalty of the unfaithful—to his bitter sorrow and regret!

"In those days the kingdom of Heaven will be like ten bridesmaids who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were sensible and five were foolish. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. But the sensible ones brought their lamps and oil in their flasks as well. Then, as the bridegroom was a very long time, they all grew drowsy and fell asleep. But in the middle of the night there came a shout, 'Wake up, here comes the bridegroom! Out you go to meet him!' Then up got all the bridesmaids and attended to their lamps. The foolish ones said to the sensible ones, 'Please give us some of your oil—our lamps are going out!' 'Oh, no,' returned the sensible ones, 'there might not be enough for all of us. Better go to the oil shop and buy some for yourselves.' But while they had gone off to buy the oil the bridegroom arrived, and those bridesmaids who were ready went in with him for the festivities and the door was shut behind them. Later on, the rest of the bridesmaids came and said,

'Oh, please, sir, open the door for us!' But he replied, 'I tell you I don't know you!' So be on the alert—for you do not know the day or the time.

25. 14 Life is hard for the fainthearted

"It is just like a man going abroad who called his household servants together before he went and handed his property over to them to manage. He gave one five thousand dollars, another two thousand and another one thousand—according to their respective abilities. Then he went away.

"The man who had received five thousand dollars went out at once and by doing business with this sum he made another five thousand. Similarly the man with two thousand dollars made another two thousand. But the man who had received one thousand dollars went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

"Some years later the master of these servants arrived and went into the accounts with them. The one who had the five thousand dollars came in and brought him an additional five thousand with the words, 'You gave me five thousand dollars, sir; look, I've increased it by another five thousand.' 'Well done!' said his master, 'You're a sound, reliable servant. You've been trustworthy over a few things, now I'm going to put you in charge of much more. Come in and share your master's rejoicing.' Then the servant who had received two thousand dollars came in and said, 'You gave me two thousand dollars, sir; look, here's two thousand more that I've managed to make by it.' 'Well done!' said his master, 'you're a sound, reliable servant. You've been trustworthy over a few things, now I'm going to put you in charge of many. Come in and share your master's pleasure.'

"Then the man who had received the one thousand dollars came in and said, 'Sir, I always knew you were a hard man, reaping where you never sowed and collecting where you never laid out—so I was scared and I went off and hid your thousand dollars in the ground. Here is your money, intact.'

"'You're a wicked, lazy servant!' his master told him. 'You say you knew that I reap where I never sowed and collect where I never laid out? Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and when I came I should at any rate have received what belongs to me with interest. Take his thousand dollars away from him and give it to the man who now has the ten thousand!' (For the man who has something will have more given to him and will have plenty. But as for the man who has nothing, even his 'nothing' will be taken away.) 'And throw this useless servant into the darkness outside, where he can weep and wail over his stupidity.'

25. 31 *The final judgment*

"But when the Son of Man comes in his splendor with all his angels with him, then he will take his seat on his glorious throne. All the nations will be assembled before him and he will separate men from each other like a shepherd separating sheep from goats. He will place the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left.

"Then the king will say to those on his right: 'Come, you who have won my Father's blessing! Take your inheritance—the kingdom reserved for you since the foundation of the world! For I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was lonely and you made me welcome. I was naked and you clothed me. I was ill and you came and looked after me. I was in prison and you came to see me there.'

"Then the true men will answer him: 'Lord, when did we see *you* hungry and give you food? When did we see *you* thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see *you* lonely and make you welcome, or see *you* naked and clothe you, or see *you* ill or in prison and go to see you?'

"And the king will reply, 'I assure you that whatever you did for the humblest of my brothers you did for me.'

"Then he will say to those on his left: 'Out of my presence, cursed as you are, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels! For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink. I was lonely and you never made me welcome. When I was naked you did nothing to clothe me; when I was sick and in prison you never cared about me.'

"Then they too will answer him: 'Lord, when did we ever see *you* hungry, or thirsty, or lonely, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and fail to look after you?'

"Then the king will answer them with these words, 'I assure you that whatever you failed to do the humblest of my brothers you failed to do to me.'

"And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the true men to eternal life."

26. 1 *Jesus announces his coming death*

When Jesus had finished all this teaching he spoke to his disciples: "Do you realize that the Passover will begin in two days' time; and the Son of Man is going to be betrayed and crucified?"



Chapter 3



LUKE

A WORK IN TWO VOLUMES (LUKE AND ACTS)

The gospel of Luke constituted the first part of a larger work on the origins of Christianity. It may be seen from the preface (1:1-4; compare Acts 1:1-2) that the author was a cultured man. He wrote the Greek language with elegance, and he displayed a sense of history (3:1, 23; etc.).

Like Matthew, the author of the Lucan gospel combined the account of Mark with the Document Q, but his revision was far more drastic than that of Matthew, for he had at his disposal a great deal of special information which was probably gathered in Palestine by none other than "Luke, the beloved physician," a companion of Paul in some of his travels (Acts 21:8, 17; Colossians 4:14).

In any case, the author of the third gospel cut open the Marcan frame in order to incorporate into his story a large bulk of special material (9:45-18:3). He also followed a special source of information for the account of the birth of Jesus, which he told from the point of view not of Joseph, as Matthew had done, but of Mary (1:1-2:52). His narrative of the passion and death also discloses access to special memories which apparently had been inaccessible to both Mark and Matthew (22:1-24:52).

THE SPECIAL FEATURES OF LUKE

The outlook of the third gospel contrasts amazingly with that of Matthew. Luke used a genealogy which presented Jesus not only

as the son of David and Abraham, but also as the son of Adam, the father of mankind (3:24-38). Whereas the Matthean astrologers asked for "the king of the Jews" (Matthew 2:2), the Lucan figure of Simeon sang a hymn of hope for "all the nations" (Luke 2:31-32).

Luke included stories which presented in a favorable light the Samaritans (10:25-37; 17:11-19) and the functionaries of the Roman administration (18:9-14; 19:1-10), whom orthodox Jews despised. He also manifested a special interest in the poor (2:7, 10; 3:11; 4:18; 6:20, 24; 12:16-21; 16:19-31), and in women and children (7:36-50; 8:2-3; 10:38-42; 11:27; 23:27-28). He did not refrain from reproducing details which showed the emotions of Jesus (9:41-44; 22:44). He included the teaching of Jesus concerning prayer (11:5-9; 18:1, 7, 9-14). Above all, he pictured Jesus praying (3:21; 5:26; 6:12; 9:18-22, 28-29; 11:1-4; 22:31-32; 23:34, 46). Far from stressing the belief in the coming of the end of the world, as Matthew had done, he implied that the kingdom of God was a present and spiritual reality (17:21; see also 19:11).

The gospel of Luke stands out as the gospel of grace and salvation for all men. It mounts like precious gems the Parables of the Lost Sheep, of the Lost Coin, and of the Lost Son (15:1-32). It also includes a number of hymns which have entered the liturgy of the church and have inspired countless musicians: the *Magnificat* (1:46-55), the *Benedictus* (1:67-79), the *Ave Maria* (1:28-35), the *Gloria in Excelsis Deo* (2:14), the *Nunc Dimittis* (2:29-32). It is no wonder that the author of this literary masterpiece became the patron saint of Christian artists.

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

1. 1 *Prefatory note*

Dear Theophilus,

Many people have already written an account of the events which have happened among us, basing their work on the evidence of those who we know were eyewitnesses as well as teachers of the message. I have therefore decided, since I have traced the course of these happenings carefully from the beginning, to set them down for you myself in their proper order, so that you may have reliable information about the matters in which you have already had instruction.

1. 5 *A vision comes to an old priest of God*

The story begins in the days when Herod was king of Judaea with a priest called Zacharias (who belonged to the Abijah section of the priesthood), whose wife Elisabeth was, like him, a descendant of Aaron. They were both truly religious people, blamelessly observing all God's commandments and requirements. They were childless through Elisabeth's infertility, and both of them were getting on in years. One day, while Zacharias was performing his priestly functions (it was the turn of his division to be on duty), it fell to him to go into the sanctuary and burn the incense. The crowded congregation outside was praying at the actual time of the incense burning, when an angel of the Lord appeared on the right side of the incense altar. When Zacharias saw him, he was terribly agitated and a sense of awe swept over him. But the angel spoke to him:

"Do not be afraid, Zacharias; your prayers have been heard. Elisabeth your wife will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. This will be joy and delight to you and many more will be glad because he is born. He will be one of God's great men; he will touch neither wine nor strong drink and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit from the moment of his birth. He will turn many of Israel's children to the Lord their God. He will go out before God in the spirit and power of Elijah—to reconcile fathers and children, and bring back the disobedient to the wisdom of good men—and he will make a people fully ready for their Lord."

But Zacharias replied to the angel:

"How can I know that this is true? I am an old man myself and my wife is getting on in years . . ."

"I am Gabriel," the angel answered. "I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and tell you this good news. Because you do not believe what I have said, you shall live in silence, and you shall be unable to speak a word until the day that it happens. But be sure that everything that I have told you will come true at the proper time."

Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zacharias, wondering why he stayed so long in the sanctuary. But when he came out and was unable to speak a word to them—for although he kept making signs, not a sound came from his lips—they realized that he had seen a vision in the Temple. Later, when his days of duty were over, he went back home, and soon afterward his wife Elisabeth became pregnant and kept herself secluded for five months.

"How good the Lord is to me," she would say, "now that he has taken away the shame that I have suffered!"

1. 26 *A vision comes to a young woman in Nazareth*

Then, six months after Zacharias' vision, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a Galilean town, Nazareth by name, to a young woman who was engaged to a man called Joseph (a descendant of David). The girl's name was Mary. The angel entered her room and said,

"Greetings to you, Mary. O favored one!—the Lord be with you!"

Mary was deeply perturbed at these words and wondered what such a greeting could possibly mean. But the angel said to her,

"Do not be afraid, Mary; God loves you dearly. You are going to be the mother of a son, and you will call him Jesus. He will be great and will be known as the Son of the most high. The Lord God will give him the throne of his forefather, David, and he will be king over the people of Jacob for ever. His reign shall never end."

Then Mary spoke to an angel:

"How can this be?" she said. "I am not married!"

But the angel made this reply to her:

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, the power of the most high will overshadow you. Your child will therefore be called holy—the Son of God. Your cousin Elisabeth has also conceived a son, old as she is. Indeed, this is the sixth month for her, a woman who was called barren. For no promise of God can fail to be fulfilled."

"I belong to the Lord, body and soul," replied Mary, "let it happen as you say." And at this the angel left her.

With little delay Mary got ready and hurried off to the hillside town in Judaea where Zacharias and Elisabeth lived. She went into

their house and greeted her cousin. When Elisabeth heard her greeting, the unborn child stirred inside her and she herself was filled with the Holy Spirit, and cried out:

"Blessed are you among women, and blessed is your child! What an honor it is to have the mother of my Lord come to see me! Why, as soon as your greeting reached my ears, the child within me jumped for joy! Oh, how happy is the woman who believes in God, for he does make his promises to her come true!"

Then Mary said, "My heart is overflowing with praise of my Lord; my soul is full of joy in God my Savior. For he has deigned to notice me, his humble servant and, after this, all the people who ever shall be will call me the happiest of women! The one who can do all things has done great things for me—oh, holy is his Name! Truly, his mercy rests on those who fear him in every generation. He has shown the strength of his arm, he has swept away the high and mighty. He has set kings down from their thrones and lifted up the humble. He has satisfied the hungry with good things and sent the rich away with empty hands. Yes, he has helped Israel, his child: he has remembered the mercy that he promised to our forefathers, to Abraham and his sons for evermore!"

1. 56 *The old woman's son, John, is born*

So Mary stayed with Elisabeth about three months, and then went back to her own home. Then came the time for Elisabeth's child to be born, and she gave birth to a son. Her neighbors and relations heard of the great mercy the Lord had shown her and shared her joy.

When the eighth day came, they were going to circumcise the child and call him Zacharias, after his father, but his mother said, "Oh, no! He must be called John."

"But none of your relations is called John," they replied. And they made signs to his father to see what name he wanted the child to have. He beckoned for a writing tablet and wrote the words, "His name is John," which greatly surprised everybody. Then his power of speech suddenly came back, and his first words were to thank God. The neighbors were awestruck at this, and all these incidents were reported in the hill country of Judaea. People turned the whole matter over in their hearts, and said,

"What is this child's future going to be?" For the Lord's blessing was plainly upon him.

Then Zacharias, his father, filled with the Holy Spirit and speaking like a prophet, said,

"Blessings on the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has turned his face toward his people and has set them free! And he has raised

up for us a standard of salvation in his servant David's house! Long, long ago, through the words of his holy prophets, he promised to do this for us, so that we should be safe from our enemies and secure from all who hate us. So does he continue the mercy he showed to our forefathers. So does he remember the holy agreement he made with them and the oath which he swore to our father Abraham, to make us this gift: that we should be saved from the hands of our enemies, and in his presence should serve him unafraid in holiness and righteousness all our lives.

"And you, little child, will be called the prophet of the most high, for you will go before the Lord to prepare the way for his coming. It will be for you to give his people knowledge of their salvation through the forgiveness of their sins. Because the heart of our God is full of mercy toward us, the first light of Heaven shall come to visit us—to shine on those who lie in darkness and under the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the path of peace."

The little child grew up and became strong in spirit. He lived in lonely places until the day came for him to show himself to Israel.

2. 1 *The census brings Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem*

At that time a proclamation was made by Caesar Augustus that all the inhabited world should be registered. This was the first census, undertaken while Cyrenius was governor of Syria; and everybody went to the town of his birth to be registered. Joseph went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to David's town, Bethlehem, in Judaea, because he was a direct descendant of David, to be registered with his future wife, Mary, now in the later stages of her pregnancy. So it happened that it was while they were there in Bethlehem that she came to the end of her time. She gave birth to her first child, a son. And as there was no place for them inside the inn, she wrapped him up and laid him in a manger.

2. 8 *A vision comes to shepherds on the hillside*

There were some shepherds living in the same part of the country, keeping guard throughout the night over their flock in the open fields. Suddenly an angel of the Lord stood by their side, the splendor of the Lord blazed around them, and they were terror-stricken. But the angel said to them,

"Do not be afraid! Listen, I bring you glorious news of great joy which is for all the people. This very day, in David's town, a Savior has been born for you. He is Christ, the Lord. Let this prove it to you: you will find a baby, wrapped up and lying in a manger."

And in a flash there appeared with the angel a vast host of the armies of Heaven, praising God, saying,

"Glory to God in the highest Heaven! Peace upon earth among men of goodwill!"

When the angels left them and went back into Heaven, the shepherds said to each other,

"Now let us go straight to Bethlehem and see this thing which the Lord has made known to us."

So they came as fast as they could and they found Mary and Joseph—and the baby lying in the manger. And when they had seen this sight, they told everybody what had been said to them about the little child. And those who heard them were amazed at what the shepherds said. But Mary treasured all these things and turned them over in her mind. The shepherds went back to work, glorifying and praising God for everything that they had heard and seen, which had happened just as they had been told.

2. 21 Mary and Joseph bring their newly born son to the Temple

At the end of the eight days, the time came for circumcising the child and he was called Jesus, the name given to him by the angel before his conception.

When the "purification" time, stipulated by the Law of Moses, was completed, they brought Jesus to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. This was to fulfill a requirement of the Law—

Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord.

They also offered the sacrifice prescribed by the Law—

A pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons.

In Jerusalem was a man by the name of Simeon. He was an upright man, devoted to the service of God, living in expectation of the "salvation of Israel." His heart was open to the Holy Spirit, and it had been revealed to him that he would not die before he saw the Lord's Christ. He had been led by the Spirit to go into the Temple, and when Jesus' parents brought the child in to have done to him what the Law required, he took him up in his arms, blessed God and said—

"At last, Lord, you can dismiss your servant in peace, as you promised! For with my own eyes I have seen your salvation which you have made ready for every people—a light to show truth to the gentiles and bring glory to your people Israel."

The child's father and mother were still amazed at what was said about him, when Simeon gave them his blessing. He said to Mary, the child's mother,

"This child is destined to make many fall and many rise in Israel and to set up a standard which many will attack—for he will

expose the secret thoughts of many hearts. And for you . . . your very soul will be pierced by a sword."

There was also present Anna, the daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Asher, who was a prophetess. She was a very old woman, having had seven years' married life, and was now a widow of eighty-four. She spent her whole life in the Temple and worshiped God night and day with fastings and prayers. She came up at this very moment, praised God and spoke about Jesus to all those in Jerusalem who were expecting redemption.

When they had completed all the requirements of the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew up and became strong and full of wisdom. And God's blessing was upon him.

2. 41 *Twelve years later: the boy Jesus goes with his parents to Jerusalem*

Every year at the Passover festival, Jesus' parents used to go to Jerusalem. When he was twelve years old they went up to the city as usual for the festival. When it was over they started back home, but the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, without his parents' knowledge. They went a day's journey assuming that he was somewhere in their company, and then they began to look for him among their relations and acquaintances. They failed to find him, however, and turned back to the city, looking for him as they went. Three days later they found him—in the Temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. All those who heard him were astonished at his powers of comprehension and at the answers that he gave. When Joseph and Mary saw him, they could hardly believe their eyes, and his mother said to him,

"Why have you treated us like this, my son? Here have your father and I been very worried, looking for you everywhere!"

And Jesus replied,

"But why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

But they did not understand his reply. Then he went home with them to Nazareth and was obedient to them. And his mother treasured all these things in her heart. And as Jesus continued to grow in body and mind, he grew also in the love of God and of those who knew him.



7. 36 *Jesus contrasts unloving righteousness with loving patience*

Then one of the Pharisees asked Jesus to a meal with him. When Jesus came into the house, he took his place at the table and a

woman, known in the town as a bad woman, found out that Jesus was there and brought an alabaster flask of perfume and stood behind him crying, letting her tears fall on his feet and then drying them with her hair. Then she kissed them and anointed them with the perfume. When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were really a prophet, he would know who this woman is and what sort of person is touching him. He would have realized that she is a bad woman." Then Jesus spoke to him:

"Simon, there is something I want to say to you."

"Very well, master," he returned, "say it."

"Once upon a time, there were two men in debt to the same moneylender. One owed him fifty dollars and the other five. And since they were unable to pay, he generously canceled both of their debts. Now, which one of them do you suppose will love him more?"

"Well," returned Simon, "I suppose it will be the one who has been more generously treated."

"Exactly," replied Jesus, and then turning to the woman, he said to Simon:

"You can see this woman? I came into your house but you provided no water to wash my feet. But she has washed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. There was no warmth in your greeting, but she, from the moment I came in, has not stopped covering my feet with kisses. You gave me no oil for my head, but she has put perfume on my feet. That is why I tell you, Simon, that her sins, many as they are, are forgiven; for she has shown me so much love. But the man who has little to be forgiven has only a little love to give."

Then he said to her,

"Your sins are forgiven."

And the men at table with him began to say to themselves,

"And who is this man, who even forgives sins?"

But Jesus said to the woman,

"It is your faith that has saved you. Go in peace."



10. 25 *Jesus shows the relevance of the Law to actual living*

Then one of the experts in the Law stood up to test him and said,

"Master, what must I do to be sure of eternal life?"

"What does the Law say and what has your reading taught you?" said Jesus.

"The Law says, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind—and thy neighbor as thyself,'" he replied.

"Quite right," said Jesus. "Do that and you will live."

But the man, wanting to justify himself, continued,

"But who is my 'neighbor'?"

And Jesus gave him the following reply:

"A man was once on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho. He fell into the hands of bandits who stripped off his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead. It so happened that a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. A Levite also came on the scene, and when he saw him he too passed by on the other side. But then a Samaritan traveler came along to the place where the man was lying, and at the sight of him he was touched with pity. He went across to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put him on his own mule, brought him to an inn and did what he could for him. Next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the words: 'Look after him, will you? I will pay you back whatever more you spend, when I come through here on my return.' Which of these three seems to you to have been a neighbor to the bandits' victim?"

"The man who gave him practical sympathy," he replied.

"Then you go and give the same," returned Jesus.

10. 38 *Yet emphasizes the need for quiet listening to his words*

As they continued their journey, Jesus came to a village and a woman called Martha welcomed him to her house. She had a sister by the name of Mary who settled down at the Lord's feet and was listening to what he said. But Martha was very worried about her elaborate preparations and she burst in, saying,

"Lord, don't you *mind* that my sister has left me to do everything by myself? Tell her to get up and help me!"

But the Lord answered her:

"Martha, my dear, you are worried and bothered about providing so many things. Only a few things are really needed, perhaps only one. Mary has chosen the best part and you must not tear it away from her!"

15. 1 *Jesus speaks of the love of God for "the lost"*

Now all the tax collectors and "outsiders" were crowding around to hear what he had to say. The Pharisees and the scribes complained of this, remarking,

"This man accepts sinners and even eats his meals with them."

So Jesus spoke to them, using this parable:

"Wouldn't any man among you who owned a hundred sheep, and lost one of them, leave the ninety-nine to themselves in the open, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when

he has found it, he will put it on his shoulders with great joy, and as soon as he gets home, he will call his friends and neighbors together. 'Come and celebrate with me,' he will say, 'for I have found that sheep of mine which was lost.' I tell you that it is the same in Heaven—there is more joy over one sinner whose heart is changed than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance.

"Or if there is a woman who has ten silver coins, if she should lose one, won't she take a lamp and sweep and search the house from top to bottom until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together. 'Come and celebrate with me,' she says, 'for I have found that coin I lost.' I tell you, it is the same in Heaven—there is rejoicing among the angels of God over one sinner whose heart is changed."

Then he continued:

"Once there was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the property that will come to me.' So he divided up his property between the two of them. Before very long, the younger son collected all his belongings and went off to a foreign land, where he squandered his wealth in the wildest extravagance. And when he had run through all his money, a terrible famine arose in that country, and he began to feel the pinch. Then he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country who sent him out into the fields to feed the pigs. He got to the point of longing to stuff himself with the food the pigs were eating, and not a soul gave him anything. Then he came to his senses and cried aloud, 'Why, dozens of my father's hired men have got more food than they can eat, and here am I dying of hunger! I will get up and go back to my father, and I will say to him: "Father, I have done wrong in the sight of Heaven and in your eyes. I don't deserve to be called your son any more. Please take me on as one of your hired men."' So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still some distance off, his father saw him and his heart went out to him, and he ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. But his son said, 'Father, I have done wrong in the sight of Heaven and in your eyes. I don't deserve to be called your son any more. . . .' 'Hurry!' called out his father to the servants. 'Fetch the best clothes and put them on him! Put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet, and get that calf we've fattened and kill it, and we will have a feast and a celebration! For this is my son—I thought he was dead, and he's alive again. I thought I had lost him, and he's found!' And they began to get the festivities going.

"But his elder son was out in the fields, and as he came near the

house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants across to him and inquired what was the meaning of it all. 'Your brother has arrived, and your father has killed the calf we fattened because he got him home again safe and sound,' was the reply. But he was furious and refused to go inside the house. So his father came outside and called him. Then he burst out: 'Look, how many years have I slaved for you and never disobeyed a single order of yours, and yet you have never given me so much as a young goat, so that I could give my friends a dinner! But when that son of yours arrives, who has spent all your money on prostitutes, for *him* you kill the calf we've fattened!' But the father replied: 'My dear son, you have been with me all the time and everything I have is yours. But we *had* to celebrate and show our joy. For this is your brother; I thought he was dead—and he's alive. I thought he was lost—and he is found!'

16. 1 *A clever rogue, and the right use of money*

Then there is this story he told his disciples:

"Once there was a rich man whose agent was reported to him to be mismanaging his property. So he summoned him and said, 'What's this that I hear about you? Give me an account of your stewardship—you're not fit to manage my household any longer.' At this the agent said to himself, 'What am I going to do now that my employer is taking away the stewardship from me? I am not strong enough to dig and I can't sink to begging. Ah, I know what I'll do so that when I lose my position people will welcome me into their homes!' So he sent for each one of his master's debtors. 'How much do you owe my master?' he said to the first. 'A hundred barrels of oil,' he replied. 'Here,' replied the agent, 'take your bill, sit down, hurry up and write in fifty.' Then he said to another, 'And what's the size of your debt?' 'A thousand bushels of wheat,' he replied. 'Take your bill,' said the agent, 'and write in eight hundred.' Now the master praised this rascally steward because he had been so careful for his own future. For the children of this world are considerably more shrewd in dealing with their contemporaries than the children of light. Now my advice to you is to use 'money,' tainted as it is, to make yourselves friends, so that when it comes to an end they may welcome you into eternal habitations.

"The man who is faithful in the little things will be faithful in the big things, and the man who cheats in the little things will cheat in the big things too. So that if you are not fit to be trusted to deal with the wicked wealth of this world, who will trust you with the true riches? And if you are not trustworthy with someone

else's property, who will give you property of your own? No servant can serve two masters. He is bound to hate one and love the other, or give his loyalty to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and the power of money at the same time."



16. 19 *Jesus shows the fearful consequence of social injustice*

"There was once a rich man who used to dress in purple and fine linen and lead a life of daily luxury. And there was a poor man called Lazarus who was put down at his gate. He was covered with sores. He used to long to be fed with the scraps from the rich man's table. Yes, and the dogs used to come and lick his sores. Well, it happened that the poor man died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And from among the dead he looked up and saw Abraham a long way away, and Lazarus in his arms. 'Father Abraham!' he cried out, 'please pity me. Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in agony in these flames.' But Abraham replied: 'Remember, my son, that you used to have the good things in your lifetime, while Lazarus suffered the bad. Now he is being comforted here, while you are in agony. And besides this, a great chasm has been set between you and us, so that those who want to go to you from this side cannot do so, and people cannot come to us from your side.' At this he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers. He could warn them about all this and prevent their coming to this place of torture.' But Abraham said. 'They have Moses and the Prophets: they can listen to them.' 'Ah no, father Abraham,' he said, 'if only someone were to go to them from the dead, they would change completely.' But Abraham told him, 'If they will not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they would not be convinced even if somebody were to rise from the dead.'"



18. 1 *Jesus urges his disciples to persist in prayer*

Then he gave them an illustration to show that they must always pray and never lose heart.

"Once upon a time," he said, "there was a magistrate in a town who had neither fear of God nor respect for his fellow men. There was a widow in the town who kept coming to him, saying, 'Please protect me from the man who is trying to ruin me.' And for a long time he refused. But later he said to himself, 'Although I don't fear God and have no respect for men, yet this woman is such a nui-

sance that I shall give judgment in her favor, or else her continual visits will be the death of me!" "

Then the Lord said,

"Notice how this dishonest magistrate behaved. Do you suppose God, patient as he is, will not see justice done for his chosen, who appeal to him day and night? I assure you he will not delay in seeing justice done. Yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find men on earth who believe in him?"

18. 9 *Jesus tells a story against the self-righteous*

Then he gave this illustration to certain people who were confident of their own goodness and looked down on others:

"Two men went up to the Temple to pray; one was a Pharisee, the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed like this with himself: 'O God, I do thank thee that I am not like the rest of mankind, greedy, dishonest, impure, or even like that tax collector over there. I fast twice every week; I give away a tenth part of all my income.' But the tax collector stood in a distant corner, scarcely daring to look up to Heaven, and with a gesture of despair, said, 'God, have mercy on a sinner like me.' I assure you that he was the man who went home justified in God's sight rather than the other one. For everyone who sets himself up as somebody will become a nobody, and the man who makes himself nobody will become somebody."



24. 1 *The first day of the week: the empty tomb*

But at the first signs of dawn on the first day of the week, they went to the tomb, taking with them the aromatic spices they had prepared. They discovered that the stone had been rolled away from the tomb, but on going inside, the body of the Lord Jesus was not to be found. While they were still puzzling over this, two men suddenly stood at their elbow, dressed in dazzling light. The women were terribly frightened, and turned their eyes away and looked at the ground. But the two men spoke to them:

"Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here: he has risen! Remember that he said to you, while he was still in Galilee—that the Son of Man must be betrayed into the hands of sinful men, and must be crucified, and must rise again on the third day."

Then they did remember what he had said, and they turned their backs on the tomb and went and told all this to the eleven and the others who were with them.

It was Mary of Magdala, Joanna, Mary the mother of James,

and their companions who made this report to the apostles. But it struck them as sheer imagination, and they did not believe the women. Only Peter got up and ran to the tomb. He stooped down and saw the linen clothes lying there all by themselves, and he went home wondering what had happened.

24. 13 *The walk to Emmaus*

Then on the same day we find two of them going off to Emmaus, a village about seven miles from Jerusalem. As they went they were deep in conversation about everything that had happened. While they were absorbed in their serious talk and discussion, Jesus himself approached and walked along with them, but something prevented them from recognizing him. Then he spoke to them:

"What is all this discussion that you are having on your walk?"

They stopped, their faces drawn with misery, and the one called Cleopas replied,

"You must be the only stranger in Jerusalem who hasn't heard all the things that have happened there recently!"

"What things?" asked Jesus.

"Oh, all about Jesus, from Nazareth. There was a man—a prophet strong in what he did and what he said, in God's eyes as well as the people's. Haven't you heard how our chief priests and rulers handed him over for execution, and had him crucified? But we were hoping he was the one who was to come and set Israel free. . . .

"Yes, and as if that were not enough, it's getting on for three days since all this happened; and some of our womenfolk have disturbed us profoundly. For they went to the tomb at dawn, and then when they couldn't find his body they said that they had had a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of our people went straight off to the tomb and found things just as the women had described them—but they didn't see *him!*"

Then he himself spoke to them:

"Aren't you failing to understand, and slow to believe in all that the prophets have said? Was it not inevitable that Christ should suffer like that and so find his glory?"

Then, beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them everything in the scriptures that referred to himself.

They were by now approaching the village to which they were going. He gave the impression that he meant to go on further, but they stopped him with the words,

"Do stay with us. It is nearly evening and soon the day will be over."

So he went indoors to stay with them. Then it happened! While he was sitting at table with them he took the loaf, gave thanks, broke it and passed it to them. Their eyes opened wide and they knew him! But he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other,

"Weren't our hearts glowing while he was with us on the road, and when he made the scriptures so plain to us?"

And they got to their feet without delay and turned back to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven and their friends all together, full of the news—

"The Lord is really risen—he has appeared to Simon now!"

Then they told the story of their walk, and how they recognized him when he broke the loaf.

24. 36 *Jesus suddenly appears to the disciples*

And while they were still talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them and said,

"Peace be to you all!"

But they shrank back in terror, for they thought they were seeing a ghost.

"Why are you so worried?" said Jesus, "and why do doubts arise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet—it is really I myself! Feel me and see; ghosts have no flesh or bones as you can see that I have."

But while they still could not believe it through sheer joy, and were quite bewildered, Jesus said to them,

"Have you anything here to eat?"

They gave him a piece of broiled fish and part of a honeycomb, which he took and ate before their eyes. Then he said,

"Here and now are fulfilled the words that I told you when I was with you: that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets and Psalms must come true."

Then he opened their minds so that they could understand the scriptures, and added:

"That is how it was written, and that is why it was inevitable that Christ should suffer, and rise from the dead on the third day. So must the change of heart which leads to the forgiveness of sins be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

24. 48 *Jesus commissions them with the new message*

"You are eyewitnesses of these things. Now I hand over to you the command of my Father. Stay in the city, then, until you are clothed with power from on high."

Then he led them outside as far as Bethany, where he blessed them with uplifted hands. While he was in the act of blessing them he was parted from them and was carried up to Heaven. They worshiped him, and turned back to Jerusalem with great joy, and spent their days in the Temple, praising and blessing God.

PART 2



*The Literature of the
Early Church*

Chapter 4



THE APOSTLES

THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD

Ever since the conquests of Alexander the Great (333–323 B.C.), the peoples of Egypt and Western Asia had felt the impact of Hellenistic culture. After two and a half centuries of warfare, an era of peace, *Pax Romana*, began for the whole Mediterranean world with the reign of the first Roman emperor, Octavius Augustus (27–14 B.C.). Well-policed highways and a system of pirate-free lines of navigation bound all the provinces together. A popular form of Greek known as the *Koine* (“common”) became the mode of communication for peoples who had hitherto spoken different languages. A few individuals enjoyed the title of “Roman citizen” (Acts 16:37, 39; 23:25–28), but the mass of the population was composed of slaves.

Belief in the Olympian gods had generally disappeared. A certain Cercidas of Megaropolis asked mockingly, “Is the eye of justice blinded as that of a mole? Is it dimmed, the sight of the fat Themis? How can they still be considered as deities, those who possess neither hearing nor sight? Why does the son of Cronos (Zeus) act with some men as a true father, and with others, as a step-father?” (*Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, III, Vol. XI, no. 1082).

Philosophical schools, especially that of Alexandria, attracted the curiosity of the cultured classes. The Stoics preached a lofty ideal of ethics. They taught that men should conform their conduct to the principle of universal reason, and find in the practice of virtue its own reward. They admitted the reality of the Supreme Being. Epicureans, on the other hand, operated on atheistic assumptions. They taught the pursuit of happiness and the avoidance of excess in all things.

The poor and the slaves welcomed the comforting promises of Oriental sects, especially those who worshiped the Great Mother

Goddess. Facing death and pain without hope of release, they submitted to strange rituals of initiation through which they sought to gain immortality. An initiate was called a "mystes," and these cults are known as "mystery religions." Many of the sectarians seem to have welcomed Christian faith with enthusiasm.

In contrast to the popular sects, the worship of the emperor constituted the official cult of the Roman state. For centuries, the rulers of Mesopotamia and Egypt, and later the kings of Persia and of the Hellenistic states, had been compared to the gods. Likewise, Augustus Caesar and his successors were granted by the Roman Senate the titles of "divine" and "savior."

THE JEWISH DISPERSION

Ever since their forced exile in Babylon (587–538 B.C.), Jews adapted themselves remarkably to the alien world of their Dispersion (*Diaspora*). While remaining different from gentiles, especially through their observance of the Sabbath, circumcision, and dietary laws, they maintained synagogues in all the large cities of the Empire, spoke the Greek language, and exercised a remarkable influence on the economic, administrative, civic, and cultural life of the entire Mediterranean world. Exempted from the obligation of emperor-worship, Judaism enjoyed the status of *religio licita* ("tolerated religion").

A number of Jewish communities were allowed judiciary and administrative autonomy within the framework of the Roman government. As long as they were considered by the authorities to be Jewish sectarians, the early Christians received all the privileges which were granted to Judaism. The synagogues of the *Diaspora* provided a bridge between the gospel and the Greco-Roman world.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Presented as a sequel to the gospel of Luke and written by the same author (Acts 1:1–2), the book of Acts tells the story of the earliest church in Jerusalem and traces the expansion of Christianity from the Jewish holy city to the capital of the world.

It falls easily into seven parts:

1. Preface and the Ascension of Christ (1:1-14)
2. The preaching of Peter and the church in Jerusalem (2:1-6:7)
3. The preaching of Stephen and the church in Palestine and Syria (6:8-12:24)
4. The first mission of Paul and the church in Cyprus and Galatia (12:25-16:5)
5. The second mission of Paul and the church in Macedonia and Greece (16:6-18:28)
6. The third mission of Paul and the church at Ephesus (19:1-20:38)
7. The captivity of Paul, from Jerusalem to Rome (21:1-28:31)

The title suggests that it offers a picture of the work accomplished by some of the Christian leaders of the first hour, for the stories of the book concentrate on Peter and especially Paul, but leave most of the others out of their scope. Important centers of early Christianity, such as Alexandria, are not even mentioned, and even the foundation of the church of Rome is only assumed (28:14-15).

The purpose of the book was to inform a certain Roman official, Theophilus (Luke 1:3), of the origins of the Christian faith, either to enlighten him or perhaps in order to help him to become a Christian (compare the style of Luke 1:1-4 with that of Acts 1:1-2).

Some scholars have suggested that the book had been written as a defense of Paul before the Roman tribunal (A.D. 62-64). The date of the book in its present form (A.D. 75-85), however, is clearly later than that of Paul's trial. Undoubtedly, the author intended to show that the church was not politically dangerous and that Roman officials had always been kindly disposed toward Christians.

THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ACTS

In order to tell the story of the church in Jerusalem, the author may have used ancient traditions which were still preserved in the Aramaic language and had to be translated into Greek. It is possible that he secured at Caesarea the memories of the deacon Philip and his four daughters (21:8). More probably, however, he

obtained this information from Luke, "the beloved physician," whose travel diary he included in his work without notice, quoting directly in the first person plural (the so-called "*We*-source": see 16:10-18; 20:5-16; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16).

The report of the Jerusalem council (15:1-35) should be read with discrimination, for it contradicts in part the testimony written by Paul himself (Gālatians 2:1-11). The author of Acts probably toned down the signs of dissent or even of the rift which tore apart the leaders of the Christian movement, and he ignored entirely the dispute which opposed Paul to Peter (Galatians 2:11-14). He wrote in the interest of peace and was also inspired by reverence for the great men of the first generation.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

1. I *Introduction*

My dear Theophilus,

In my first book I gave you some account of all that Jesus began to do and teach until the time of his ascension. Before he ascended he gave his instructions, through the Holy Spirit, to the special messengers of his choice. For after his suffering he showed himself alive to them in many convincing ways, and appeared to them repeatedly over a period of forty days talking with them about the affairs of the kingdom of God.

1. 4 *Jesus' parting words before his ascension*

On one occasion, while he was eating a meal with them, he emphasized that they were not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the Father's promise.

"You have already heard me speak about this," he said, "for John used to baptize with water, but before many days are passed you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

This naturally brought them all together, and they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you are going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

To this he replied,

"You cannot know times and dates which have been fixed by the Father's sole authority. But you are to be given power when the Holy Spirit has come to you. You will be witnesses to me, not only in Jerusalem, not only throughout Judaea, not only in Samaria, but to the very ends of the earth!"

When he had said these words he was lifted up before their eyes till a cloud hid him from their sight. While they were still gazing up into the sky as he went, suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them and said,

"Men of Galilee, why are you standing here looking up into the sky? This very Jesus who has been taken up from you into Heaven will come back in just the same way as you have seen him go."

At this they returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives which is near the city, only a Sabbath day's journey away. On

entering Jerusalem they went straight to the upstairs room where they had been staying. There were Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the patriot, and Judas the son of James. By common consent all these men, together with the women who had followed Jesus, and Mary his mother, as well as his brothers, devoted themselves to prayer.



2. 1 *The first Pentecost for the young church*

Then when the actual day of Pentecost came they were all assembled together. Suddenly there was a sound from heaven like the rushing of a violent wind, and it filled the whole house where they were seated. Before their eyes appeared tongues like flames, which separated off and settled above the head of each one of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different languages as the Spirit gave them power to proclaim his message.

2. 5 *The Church's first impact on devout Jews*

Now there were staying in Jerusalem Jews of deep faith from every nation of the world. When they heard this sound a crowd quickly collected and were completely bewildered because each one of them heard these men speaking in his own language. They were absolutely amazed and said in their astonishment,

"Listen, surely all these speakers are Galileans? Then how does it happen that every single one of us can hear the particular language he has known from childhood. There are Parthians, Medes and Elamites; there are men whose homes are in Mesopotamia, in Judaea and Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, and the parts of Africa near Cyrene, as well as visitors from Rome! There are Jews and proselytes, men from Crete and men from Arabia, yet we can all hear these men speaking of the magnificence of God in our native language."

Everyone was utterly amazed and did not know what to make of it. Indeed they kept saying to each other,

"What on earth can this mean?"

But there were others who laughed mockingly and said,

"These fellows have drunk too much new wine!"

2. 14 *Peter explains the fulfillment of God's promise*

Then Peter, with the eleven standing by him, raised his voice and addressed them:

"Fellow Jews, and all who are living now in Jerusalem, listen carefully to what I say while I explain to you what has happened! These men are not drunk as you suppose—it is after all only nine o'clock in the morning of this great feast day. No, this is something which was predicted by the prophet Joel:

And it shall be in the last days, saith God,
I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh:
And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
And your young men shall see visions,
And your old men shall dream dreams:
Yea and on my servants and on my handmaidens in those days
Will I pour forth of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.
And I will shew wonders in the heaven above,
And signs on the earth beneath;
Blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke:
The sun shall be turned into darkness,
And the moon into blood,
Before the day of the Lord come,
That great and notable day:
And it shall be, that whosoever shall call on the name of the
Lord shall be saved.

"Men of Israel, I beg of you to listen to my words. Jesus of Nazareth was a man proved to you by God himself through the works of power, the miracles and the signs which God showed through him here amongst you—as you very well know. This man, who was put into your power by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed up and murdered, and you used for your purpose men without the Law! But God would not allow the bitter pains of death to touch him. He raised him to life again—and indeed there was nothing by which death could hold such a man. When David speaks about him he says,

I beheld the Lord always before my face;
For he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:
Therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;
Moreover my flesh also shall dwell in hope:
Because thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades,
Neither wilt thou give thy holy one to see corruption.
Thou madest known unto me the ways of life;
Thou shalt make me full of gladness with thy countenance.

"Men and brother Jews, I can surely speak freely to you about the patriarch David. There is no doubt that he died and was buried, and his grave is here among us to this day. But while he was alive he was a prophet. He knew that God had given him a most solemn

promise that he would place one of his descendants upon his throne. He foresaw the resurrection of Christ, and it is this of which he is speaking. Christ was not deserted in death and his body was never destroyed. *Christ is the man Jesus, whom God raised up—a fact of which all of us are eyewitnesses!* He has been raised to the right hand of God; he has received from the Father and poured out upon us the promised Holy Spirit—that is what you now see and hear! David never ascended to Heaven, but he certainly said,

The Lord said unto my *Lord*,
Sit thou on my right hand,
Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.

“Now therefore the whole nation of Israel must know beyond the shadow of a doubt that this Jesus, whom you crucified, God has declared to be both Lord and Christ.”

2. 37 *The reaction to Peter's speech*

When they heard this they were cut to the quick, and they cried to Peter and the other apostles,

“Men and fellow Jews, what shall we do now?”

Peter told them,

“You must repent and every one of you must be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, so that you may have your sins forgiven and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For this great promise is for you and your children—yes, and for all who are far away, for as many as the Lord our God shall call to himself!”

Peter said much more than this as he gave his testimony and implored them, saying,

“Save yourselves from this perverted generation!”

2. 41 *The first large-scale conversion*

Then those who welcomed his message were baptized, and on that day alone about three thousand souls were added to the number of disciples. They continued steadily learning the teaching of the apostles, and joined in their fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayer.

Everyone felt a deep sense of awe while many miracles and signs took place through the apostles. All the believers shared everything in common; they sold their possessions and goods and divided the proceeds among the fellowship according to individual need. Day after day they met by common consent in the Temple; they broke bread together in their homes, sharing meals with simple joy. They praised God continually and all the people respected them. Every day the Lord added to their number those who were finding salvation.

3. 1 *A public miracle and its explanation*

One afternoon Peter and John were on their way to the Temple for the three o'clock hour of prayer. A man who had been lame from birth was being carried along in the crowd, for it was the daily practice to put him down at what was known as the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, so that he could beg from the people as they went in. As this man saw Peter and John just about to enter he asked them to give him something. Peter looked intently at the man and so did John. Then Peter said,

"Look straight at us!"

The man looked at them expectantly, hoping that they would give him something.

"If you are expecting silver or gold," Peter said to him, "I have neither, but what I have I will certainly give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, *walk!*"

Then he took him by the right hand and helped him up. At once his feet and ankle bones were strengthened, and he positively jumped to his feet, stood, and then walked. Then he went with them into the Temple, where he walked about, leaping and praising God. Everyone noticed him as he walked and praised God and recognized him as the same beggar who used to sit at the Beautiful Gate, and they were all overcome with wonder and sheer astonishment at what had happened to him. Then, while the man himself still clung to Peter and John, all the people in their excitement ran together and crowded round them in Solomon's Porch.



4. 1 *The first clash with Jewish authorities*

While they were still talking to the people the priests, the captain of the temple guard, and the Sadducees moved toward them, thoroughly incensed that they should be teaching the people and should assure them that the resurrection of the dead had been proved through the rising of Jesus. So they arrested them and, since it was now evening, kept them in custody until the next day. Nevertheless, many of those who had heard what they said believed, and the number of men alone rose to about five thousand.



5. 15 *Miraculous power radiates from the apostles*

Many signs and wonders were now happening among the people through the apostles' ministry. In consequence people would bring out their sick into the streets and lay them down on stretchers or

beds, so that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall upon some of them. In addition a large crowd collected from the cities round about Jerusalem, bringing with them their sick and all those who were suffering from evil spirits. And they were all cured.

5. 17 Furious opposition reduced to impotence

All this roused the High Priest and his allies the Sadducean party, and in a fury of jealousy they had the apostles arrested and put into the common jail. But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and led them out, saying,

“Go and stand and speak in the Temple. Tell the people all about this new life!”

After receiving these instructions they entered the Temple about daybreak, and began to teach. When the High Priest arrived he and his supporters summoned the Sanhedrin and indeed the whole senate of the people of Israel. Then he sent to the jail to have the apostles brought in. But when the officers arrived at the prison they could not find them there. They came back and reported,

“We found the prison securely locked and the guards standing on duty at the doors, but when we opened up we found no one inside.”

When the captain of the Temple guard and the chief priests heard this report they were completely mystified at the apostles’ disappearance and wondered what further developments there would be. However, someone arrived and reported to them,

“Why, the men you put in jail are standing in the Temple teaching the people!”

Then the captain went out with his men and fetched them. They dared not use any violence, however, for the people might have stoned them. So they brought them in and made them stand before the Sanhedrin. The High Priest called for an explanation.

“We gave you the strictest possible orders,” he said to them, “not to give any teaching in this name. And look what has happened—you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and what is more you are determined to fasten the guilt of that man’s death upon us!”

5. 29 The apostles speak the unpalatable truth

Then Peter and the apostles answered him,

“It is our duty to obey the orders of God rather than the orders of men. It was the God of our fathers who raised up Jesus, whom you murdered by hanging him on a cross of wood. God has raised this man to his own right hand as prince and savior, to bring repentance and the forgiveness of sins to Israel. What is more, we are witnesses to these matters, and so is the Holy Spirit which God gives to those who obey his commands.”

5. 33 *Calm counsel temporarily prevails*

When the members of the council heard these words they were so furious that they wanted to kill the apostles. But one man stood up in the assembly, a Pharisee by the name of Gamaliel, a teacher of the Law who was held in great respect by the people, and gave orders for them to be taken outside for a few minutes. Then he addressed the assembly:

"Men of Israel, be very careful of what action you intend to take against these men! Remember that some time ago a man called Theudas made himself conspicuous by claiming to be someone or other, and he had a following of four hundred men. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and the movement came to nothing. Then later, in the days of the census, that man Judas from Galilee appeared and enticed many of the people to follow him. But he too died and his whole following melted away. My advice to you now therefore is to let these men alone; leave them to themselves. For if this teaching or movement is merely human it will collapse of its own accord. But if it should be from God you cannot defeat them, and you might actually find yourselves fighting against God!"

They accepted his advice and called in the apostles. They had them beaten and after commanding them not to speak in the name of Jesus they let them go. So the apostles went out from the presence of the Sanhedrin full of joy that they had been considered worthy to bear humiliation for the sake of the name. Then day after day in the Temple and in people's houses they continued to teach unceasingly and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.

6. 1 *The first deacons are chosen*

About this time, when the number of disciples was continually increasing, the Greeks complained that in the daily distribution of food the Hebrews widows were being given preferential treatment. The twelve summoned the whole body of the disciples together, and said,

"It is not right that we should have to neglect preaching the Word of God in order to look after the accounts. You, our brothers, must look round and pick out from your number seven men of good reputation who are both practical and spiritually-minded and we will put them in charge of this matter. Then we shall devote ourselves wholeheartedly to prayer and the ministry of the Word."

This brief speech met with unanimous approval and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas of Antioch who had previously been a convert to the Jewish faith. They brought these men

before the apostles, and they, after prayer, laid their hands upon them.

So the Word of God gained more and more ground. The number of disciples in Jerusalem very greatly increased, while a considerable proportion of the priesthood accepted the faith.

6. 8 *The attack on the new deacon, Stephen*

Stephen, full of grace and spiritual power, continued to perform miracles and remarkable signs among the people. However, members of a Jewish synagogue known as the Libertines, together with some from the synagogues of Cyrene and Alexandria, as well as some men from Cilicia and Asia, tried debating with Stephen, but found themselves quite unable to stand up against either his practical wisdom or the spiritual force with which he spoke. In desperation they bribed men to allege, "We have heard this man making blasphemous statements against Moses and against God." At the same time they worked upon the feelings of the people, the elders and the scribes. Then they suddenly confronted Stephen, seized him and marched him off before the Sanhedrin. There they brought forward false witnesses to say, "This man's speeches are one long attack against this holy place and the Law. We have heard him say that Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses handed down to us." All who sat there in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and as they looked his face appeared to them like the face of an angel.

7. 1 *Stephen makes his defense from Israel's history: the time of Abraham*

Then the High Priest said,

"Is this statement true?"

And Stephen answered,

"My brothers and fathers, listen to me. Our glorious God appeared to our forefather, Abraham while he was in Mesopotamia before he ever came to live in Haran, and said to him, '*Get thee out of thy land and from thy kindred, and come into a land which I shall shew thee.*' That was how he came to leave the land of the Chaldeans and settle in Haran. And it was from there after his father's death that God moved him into this very land where you are living today. Yet God gave him no part of it as an inheritance, not a foot that he could call his own, and yet promised that it should eventually belong to him that his descendants should live as strangers in a foreign land where they would become slaves and be ill-treated for four hundred years, '*And the nation to which they*

shall be in bondage will I judge, said God; and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place.'

"Further, he gave him the agreement of circumcision, so that when Abraham became the father of Isaac he circumcised him on the eighth day.



7. 44 *God's privileges to Israel*

"There in the desert our forefathers possessed the Tabernacle of witness made according to the pattern which Moses saw when God instructed him to build it. This Tabernacle was handed down to our forefathers, and they brought it here when the gentiles were defeated under Joshua, for God drove them out as our ancestors advanced. Here it stayed until the time of David. David won the approval of God and prayed that he might find a habitation for the God of Jacob, even though it was not he but Solomon who actually built a house for him. Yet of course the most high does not live in man-made houses. As the prophet says,

The heaven is my throne,
And the earth the footstool of my feet:
What manner of house will ye build me? saith the Lord:
Or what is the place of my rest?
Did not my hand make all these things?

7. 51 *Yet Israel is blind and disobedient*

"You obstinate people, heathen in your thinking, heathen in the way you are listening to me now! It is always the same—you never fail to resist the Holy Spirit! Just as your fathers did, so are you doing now. Can you name a single prophet whom your fathers did not persecute? They killed the men who long ago foretold the coming of the just one, and now in our own day you have become his betrayers and his murderers. You are the men who have received the Law of God miraculously, by the hand of angels, *and you are the men who have disobeyed it!*"

7. 54 *The truth arouses murderous fury*

These words stung them to fury and they ground their teeth at him in rage. Stephen, filled through all his being with the Holy Spirit, looked steadily up into Heaven. He saw the glory of God, and Jesus himself standing at his right hand.

"Look!" he exclaimed, "the heavens are opened and I can see the Son of Man standing at God's right hand!"

At this they put their fingers in their ears. Yelling with fury, as

one man they made a rush at him and hustled him out of the city and stoned him. The witnesses* of the execution flung their clothes

* In Jewish law the "witnesses" were also the executioners.
at the feet of a young man by the name of Saul.

So they stoned Stephen while he called upon God, and said,
"Jesus, Lord, receive my spirit!"

Then, on his knees, he cried in ringing tones,
"Lord, forgive them for this sin."

And with these words he fell into the sleep of death, while Saul gave silent assent to his execution.

8. *1b Widespread persecution follows Stephen's death*

On that very day a great storm of persecution burst upon the church in Jerusalem. All church members except the apostles were scattered over the countryside of Judaea and Samaria. While reverent men buried Stephen and mourned deeply over him, Saul harassed the church bitterly. He would go from house to house, drag out both men and women and have them committed to prison. Those who were dispersed by this action went throughout the country, preaching the good news of the message as they went. Philip, for instance, went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to the people there. His words met with a ready and sympathetic response from the large crowds who listened to him and saw the miracles which he performed. With loud cries evil spirits came out of those who had been possessed by them, and many paralyzed and lame people were cured. As a result there was great rejoicing in that city.



9. *1 The crisis for Saul*

But Saul, still breathing murderous threats against the disciples of the Lord, went to the High Priest and begged him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he should find there any followers of the Way, whether men or women, he could bring them back to Jerusalem as prisoners.

But on his journey, as he neared Damascus, a light from Heaven suddenly blazed around him, and he fell to the ground. Then he heard a voice speaking to him,

"Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"

"Who are you, Lord?" he asked.

"I am Jesus whom you are persecuting," was the reply. "But now stand up and go into the city and there you will be told what you must do."

His companions on the journey stood there speechless, for they had heard the voice but could see no one. Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they took him by the hand and led him into Damascus. There he remained sightless for three days, and during that time he had nothing either to eat or to drink.

9. 10 *God's preparation for the converted Saul*

Now in Damascus there was a disciple by the name of Ananias. The Lord spoke to this man in a dream, calling him by his name.

"I am here, Lord," he replied.

Then the Lord said to him,

"Get up and go down to the street called Straight and inquire at the house of Judas for a man named Saul from Tarsus. At this moment he is praying and he sees in his mind's eye a man by the name of Ananias coming into the house, and placing his hands upon him to restore his sight."

But Ananias replied,

"Lord, I have heard on all hands about this man and how much harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem! Why, even now he holds powers from the chief priests to arrest all who call upon your name."

But the Lord said to him,

"Go on your way, for this man is my chosen instrument to bear my name before the gentiles and their kings, as well as to the sons of Israel. Indeed, I myself will show him what he must suffer for the sake of my name."

Then Ananias set out and went to the house, and there he laid his hands upon Saul, and said,

"Saul, brother, the Lord has sent me—Jesus who appeared to you on your journey here—so that you may recover your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

Immediately something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got to his feet and was baptized. Then he took some food and regained his strength.

9. 19b *Saul's conversion astounds the disciples*

Saul stayed with the disciples in Damascus for some time. Without delay he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues declaring that he is the Son of God. All his hearers were staggered and kept saying,

"Isn't this the man who so bitterly persecuted those who called on the name in Jerusalem, and came down here with the sole object of taking back all such people as prisoners before the chief priests?"

But Saul went on from strength to strength, reducing to confu-

sion the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving beyond doubt that this man is Christ.

9. 23 *The long revenge on the "renegade" begins*

After some time the Jews devised a plot to kill Saul, but news of this came to his ears. Although in their murderous scheme the Jews watched the gates day and night for him, Saul's disciples took him one night and let him down through an opening in the wall by lowering him in a basket.

9. 26 *At Jerusalem Saul is suspect: Barnabas conciliates*

When Saul reached Jerusalem he tried to join the disciples. But they were all afraid of him, finding it impossible to believe that he was a disciple. Barnabas, however, took him by the hand and introduced him to the apostles, and explained to them how he had seen the Lord on his journey, and how the Lord had spoken to him. He further explained how Saul had spoken in Damascus with the utmost boldness in the name of Jesus. After that Saul joined with them in all their activities in Jerusalem, preaching fearlessly in the name of the Lord. He talked and argued with the Greek-speaking Jews, but they made several attempts on his life. When the brothers realized this they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

9. 31 *A time of peace*

The whole church throughout Judaea, Galilee, and Samaria now enjoyed a period of peace. It became established and as it went forward in reverence for the Lord and in the strengthening presence of the Holy Spirit, continued to grow in numbers.



II. 19 *Persecution has spread the gospel*

Now those who had been dispersed by the persecution which arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, giving the message as they went to Jews only. However, among their number were natives of Cyprus and Cyrene, and these men, on their arrival at Antioch, proclaimed their message to the Greeks as well, telling them the good news of the Lord Jesus. The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. News of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw this working of God's grace, he was delighted. He urged them all to be resolute in their faithfulness to the Lord, for

he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. So it happened that a considerable number of people became followers of the Lord.

11. 25 *Believers are called "Christians" for the first time*

Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to find Saul. When he found him he brought him up to Antioch. Then for a whole year they met together with the church and taught a large crowd. It was in Antioch that the disciples were first given the name of "Christians."

11. 27 *The young church and famine relief*

During this period some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them by the name of Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there was to be a great famine throughout the world. (This actually happened in the days of Claudius.) The disciples determined to send relief to the brothers in Judaea, each contributing as he was able. This they did, sending their contribution to the elders there personally through Barnabas and Saul.

12. 1 *Herod kills James and imprisons Peter*

It was at this time that King Herod laid violent hands on some of the church members. James, John's brother, he executed with the sword, and when he found this action pleased the Jews he went on to arrest Peter as well. It was during the days of unleavened bread that he actually made the arrest. He put Peter in prison with no less than four platoons of soldiers to guard him, intending to bring him out to the people after the Passover. So Peter was closely guarded in the prison, while the church prayed to God earnestly on his behalf.

12. 6 *Peter's miraculous rescue*

On the very night that Herod was planning to bring him out, Peter was asleep between two soldiers, chained with double chains, while guards maintained a strict watch in the doorway of the prison. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared, and light shone in the cell. He tapped Peter on the side and woke him up, saying, "Get up quickly." His chains fell away from his hands and the angel said to him, "Fasten your belt and put on your sandals." And he did so. Then the angel continued, "Wrap your cloak round you and follow me." So Peter followed him out, not knowing whether what the angel was doing was real—indeed he felt he must be taking part in a vision. So they passed right through the first and second guard-points and came to the iron gate that led out into the city. This opened for them of its own accord, and they

went out and had passed along one street when the angel suddenly vanished from Peter's sight. Then Peter came to himself and said aloud, "Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent his angel to rescue me from the power of Herod and from all that the Jewish people are expecting." As the truth broke upon him he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John surnamed Mark, where many were gathered together in prayer. As he knocked at the door a young maid called Rhoda came to answer it, but on recognizing Peter's voice failed to open the door from sheer joy. Instead she ran inside and reported that Peter was standing on the doorstep. At this they said to her,

"You must be mad!"

But she insisted that it was true. Then they said,

"Then it is his angel."

But Peter continued to stand there knocking on the door, and when they opened it and recognized him they were simply amazed. Peter, however, made a gesture to them to stop talking while he explained to them how the Lord had brought him out of prison. Then he said,

"Go and tell James and the other brothers what has happened."

After this he left them and went on to another place.

12. 18 *Peter's escape infuriates Herod*

But when morning came there was a great commotion among the soldiers as to what could have happened to Peter. When Herod had had a search put out for him without success, he cross-examined the guards and then ordered their execution. Then he left Judaea and went down to Caesarea and stayed there.

12. 20 *But Herod dies a terrible death*

Now Herod was very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon. They approached him in a body and after winning over Blastus the king's chamberlain, they begged him for peace. They were forced to do this because their country's food supply was dependent on the king's dominions. So on an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat on the public throne and made a speech to them. At this the people kept shouting, "This is a god speaking, not a mere man!" Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down because he did not give God the glory. And in fearful internal agony he died.

12. 24 *The message continues to spread*

But the Word of the Lord continued to gain ground and increase its influence. Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when

they had completed their mission there, bringing with them John whose surname was Mark.

13. 1 *Saul and Barnabas are called to a special task*

Now there were in the church at Antioch both prophets and teachers—Barnabas, for example, Simeon surnamed Niger, Lucius the Cyrenian, Manaen the foster brother of the governor Herod, and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit spoke to them, saying,

“Set Barnabas and Saul apart for me for a task to which I have called them.”

At this, after further fasting and prayer, they laid their hands on them and set them free for this work. So these two, sent at the Holy Spirit’s command, went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed off to Cyprus. On their arrival at Salamis they began to proclaim God’s message in the Jewish synagogues, having John as their assistant. As they made their way through the island as far as Paphos they came across a man named Bar-Jesus, a Jew who was both a false prophet and a magician. This man was attached to Sergius Paulus, the proconsul, who was himself a man of intelligence. He sent for Barnabas and Saul as he was anxious to hear God’s message. But Elymas the magician (for that is the translation of his name) opposed them, doing his best to dissuade the proconsul from accepting the faith. Then Saul (who is also called Paul), filled with the Holy Spirit, eyed him closely and said,

“You son of the devil, you enemy of all true goodness, you monster of trickery and evil, is it not high time you gave up trying to pervert the truth of the Lord? Now listen, the Lord himself will touch you, for some time you will not see the light of the sun—you will be blind!”

Immediately a mist and then an utter blackness came over his eyes, and he went round trying to find someone to lead him by the hand. When the proconsul saw what had happened he believed, for he was shaken to the core at the Lord’s teaching.

13. 13 *Saul (now Paul) comes to Antioch in Pisidia*

Then Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and went to Perga in Pamphylia. There John left them and turned back to Jerusalem, but they continued their journey through Perga to the Antioch in Pisidia. They went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day and took their seats. After the reading of the Law and Prophets, the leaders of the synagogue sent to them with a message,

“Men and brothers, if you have any message of encouragement for the people, by all means speak.”

13. 16 *Paul shows the Jews where their history leads*

So Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand, began:

"Men of Israel and all of you who fear God, listen to me. The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and prospered the people even while they were exiles in the land of Egypt. Then he lifted up his arm and led them out of that land. Yes, and he bore with them for forty years in the desert. He destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan before he gave them that land as their inheritance for some four hundred and fifty years. After that he gave them judges until the time of the prophet Samuel. Then when they begged for a king God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, to be their king for forty years. After he had deposed him he raised David to the throne, a man of whom God himself bore testimony in the words, '*I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after my own heart, who shall do all my will.*' From the descendants of this man, according to his promise, God has brought Jesus to Israel to be their savior. John came before him to prepare his way preaching the baptism of repentance for all the people of Israel. Indeed, as John reached the end of his time he said these words: 'What do you think I am? I am not he. But know this, someone comes after me whose shoelace I am not fit to untie!'

13. 26 *Now the message is urgent and contemporary*

"Men and brothers, sons of the race of Abraham, and all among you who fear God, it is to us that this message of salvation has now been sent! For the people of Jerusalem and their rulers refused to recognize him and to understand the voice of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day—even though in condemning him they fulfilled these very prophecies! For though they found no cause for putting him to death, they begged Pilate to have him executed. And when they had completed everything that was written about him, they took him down from the cross and laid him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead. For many days he was seen by those who had come up from Galilee to Jerusalem with him, and these men are now his witnesses to the people. And as for us we tell you the good news that the promise made to our forefathers has come true—that, in raising up Jesus, God has fulfilled it for us their children."



13. 42 *Paul succeeds in arousing deep interest—*

As they were going out the people kept on asking them to say all this again on the following Sabbath. After the meeting of the

synagogue broke up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas who spoke personally to them and urged them to put their trust in the grace of God.



Then they crossed Pisidia and arrived in Pamphylia. They proclaimed their message in Perga and then went down to Attalia. From there they sailed back to Antioch (in Syria) where they had first been commended to the grace of God for the task which they had now completed. When they arrived there they called the church together and reported to them how greatly God had worked with them and how he had opened the door of faith for the gentiles. And here at Antioch they spent a considerable time with the disciples.

15. 1 The opposition from reactionaries

Then some men came down from Judaea and began to teach the brothers, saying, "unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses you cannot be saved." Naturally this caused a serious upset among them and much earnest discussion followed with Paul and Barnabas. Finally it was agreed that Paul and Barnabas should go up to Jerusalem with some of their own people to confer with the apostles and elders about the whole question.

The church sent them off on their journey and as they went through Phoenicia and Samaria they told the story of the conversion of the gentiles and all the brothers were overjoyed to hear about it. On their arrival at Jerusalem they were welcomed by the church, by the apostles and elders, and they reported how greatly God had worked with them. But some members of the Pharisees' party who had become believers stood up and declared that it was absolutely essential that these men be told that they must be circumcised and observe the Law of Moses.

15. 6 Peter declares that God is doing something new

The apostles and elders met to consider this matter. After an exhaustive inquiry Peter stood up and addressed them in these words:

"Men and brothers, you know that from the earliest days God chose me as the one from whose lips the gentiles should hear the Word and should believe it. Moreover, God who knows men's inmost thoughts had plainly shown that this is so, for when he had cleansed their hearts through their faith he gave the Holy Spirit to the gentiles exactly as he did to us. Why then must you now strain the patience of God by trying to put on the shoulders of these disciples a burden which neither our fathers nor we were able to

bear? Surely the fact is that it is by the grace of the Lord Jesus that we are saved by faith, just as they are!"

These words produced absolute silence, and they listened to Barnabas and Paul while they gave a detailed account of the signs and wonders which God had worked through them among the gentiles.

15. 13 *James expresses the feeling of the meeting*

Silence again followed their words and then James made this reply:

"Men and brothers, listen to me. Symeon has shown how in the first place God chose a people from among the nations who should bear his name. This is in full agreement with what the prophets wrote, as in this scripture:

After these things I will return,
And I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen;
And I will build again the ruins thereof,
And I will set it up:
That the residue of men may seek after the Lord,
And all the gentiles, upon whom my name is called,
Saith the Lord who maketh these things known from the beginning of the world.

"I am firmly of the opinion that we should not put any additional obstacles before any gentiles who are turning toward God. Instead, I think we should write to them telling them to avoid anything polluted by idols, sexual immorality, eating the meat of strangled animals, or tasting blood. For after all, for many generations now Moses has had his preachers in every city and has been read aloud in the synagogues every Sabbath day."

15. 22 *The church's deputation: the message to gentile Christians*

Then the apostles, the elders and the whole church agreed to choose representatives and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. Their names were Judas, surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, both leading men of the brotherhood. They carried with them a letter bearing this message: "The apostles and elders who are your brothers send their greetings to the brothers who are gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. Since we have heard that some of our number have caused you deep distress and have unsettled your minds by giving you a message which certainly did not originate from us, we are unanimously agreed to send you chosen representatives with our well-loved Barnabas and Paul—men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. So we have sent you Judas and Silas who will give you the same message personally by word of mouth. For it has seemed right to the Holy

Spirit and to us to lay no further burden upon you except what is absolutely essential, namely, that you avoid what has been sacrificed to idols, tasting blood, eating the meat of what has been strangled, and sexual immorality. Keep yourselves clear of these things and you will make good progress. Farewell."

15. 30 *The message is received with delight*

So this party, sent off by the church, went down to Antioch and after gathering the congregation together, handed over the letter to them. And they, when they read it, were delighted with the encouragement it gave them. Judas and Silas were themselves both inspired preachers and greatly encouraged and strengthened the brothers by many talks to them. Then, after spending some time there, the brothers sent them back in peace to those who had commissioned them. Paul and Barnabas, however, stayed on in Antioch teaching and preaching the gospel of the Word of the Lord in company with many others.

15. 36 *Paul and Barnabas flatly disagree but the work prospers*

Some days later Paul spoke to Barnabas:

"Now let us go back and visit the brothers in every city where we have proclaimed the Word of the Lord to see how they are."

Barnabas wanted to take John, surnamed Mark, as their companion. But Paul disapproved of taking with them a man who had deserted them in Pamphylia and was not prepared to go on with them in their work. There was a sharp clash of opinion, so much so that they went their separate ways, Barnabas taking Mark and sailing to Cyprus, while Paul chose Silas and set out on his journey, commended to the grace of the Lord by the brothers as he did so. He traveled through Syria and Cilicia and strengthened the churches.

16. 1 *Paul chooses Timothy as companion*

He also went to Derbe and Lystra. At Lystra there was a disciple by the name of Timothy whose mother was a Jewish Christian, though his father was a Greek. Timothy was held in high regard by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium, and Paul wanted to take him on as his companion. Everybody knew that his father was a Greek, and Paul therefore had him circumcised because of the attitude of the Jews in these places. As they went on their way through the cities, they passed on to them for their observance the decisions which had been reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. Consequently the churches grew stronger and stronger in the faith and their numbers increased daily.

16. 6 *Paul and Silas find their journey divinely directed*

They made their way through Phrygia and Galatia, but the Holy Spirit prevented them from speaking God's message in Asia. When they came to Mysia they tried to enter Bithynia, but again the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them. So they passed by Mysia and came down to Troas, where one night Paul had a vision of a Macedonian man standing and appealing to him in the words: "Come over to Macedonia and help us!" As soon as Paul had seen this vision we made every effort to get on to Macedonia, convinced that God had called us to give them the good news.

16. 11 *The gospel comes to Europe: a businesswoman is converted*

So we set sail from Troas and ran a straight course to Samothrace, and on the following day to Neapolis. From there we went to Philippi, a Roman garrison town and the chief city in that part of Macedonia. We spent some days in Philippi and on the Sabbath day we went out of the city gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place for prayer. There we sat down and spoke to the women who had assembled. One of our hearers was a woman named Lydia. (She came from Thyatira and was a dealer in purple-dyed cloth.) She was already a believer in God, and he opened her heart to accept Paul's words. When she and her household had been baptized she appealed to us, saying,

"If you are satisfied that I am a true believer in the Lord, then come down to my house and stay there."

And she insisted on our doing so.

16. 16 *Conflict with evil spirits and evil men*

One day while we were going to the place of prayer we were met by a young girl who had a spirit of clairvoyance and brought her owners a good deal of profit by foretelling the future. She would follow Paul and the rest of us, crying out, "These men are servants of the most high God, and they are telling you the way of salvation." She continued this behavior for many days, and then Paul, in a burst of irritation, turned round and spoke to the spirit in her:

"I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!"

And it came out immediately. But when the girl's owners saw that their hope of making money out of her had disappeared, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them before the authorities in the market square. There they brought them before the chief magistrates and said,

"These men are Jews and are causing a great disturbance in

our city. They are proclaiming customs which it is illegal for us as Roman citizens to accept or practice."

At this the crowd joined in the attack, and the magistrates had them stripped and ordered them to be beaten with rods. Then, after giving them a severe beating, they threw them into prison, instructing the jailer to keep them safe. On receiving such strict orders, he hustled them into the inner jail and fastened their feet securely in the stocks.

16. 25 *The midnight deliverance: the jailer becomes a Christian*

But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God while the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, big enough to shake the foundations of the prison. Immediately all the doors flew open and everyone's chains were unfastened. When the jailer woke and saw that the doors of the prison had been opened he drew his sword and was on the point of killing himself, for he imagined that all the prisoners had escaped. But Paul called out to him at the top of his voice,

"Don't hurt yourself—we are all here!"

Then the jailer called for lights, rushed in, and trembling all over, fell at the feet of Paul and Silas. He led them outside, and said,

"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

And they replied,

"Believe in the Lord Jesus and then you will be saved, you and your household."

Then they told him and all the members of his household the message of God. There and then in the middle of the night he took them aside and washed their wounds, and he himself and all his family were baptized without delay. Then he took them into his house and offered them food, he and his whole household overjoyed at finding faith in God.

16. 35 *Paul, in a strong position, makes the authorities apologize*

When morning came, the magistrates sent their constables with the message, "Let those men go." The jailer reported this message to Paul, saying,

"The magistrates have sent to have you released. So now you can leave this place and go on your way in peace."

But Paul said to the constables,

"They beat us publicly without any kind of trial; they threw us into prison despite the fact that we are Roman citizens. And now do they want to get rid of us in this underhand way? Oh no, let them come and take us out themselves!"

The constables reported this to the magistrates, who were thoroughly alarmed when they heard that they were Romans. So they came in person and apologized to them, and after taking them outside the prison, requested them to leave the city. But on leaving the prison Paul and Silas went to Lydia's house, and when they had seen the brothers and given them fresh courage, they took their leave.

17. I Bitter opposition at Thessalonica—

Next they journeyed through Amphipolis and Apollonia and arrived at Thessalonica. Here there was a synagogue of the Jews which Paul entered, following his usual custom. On three Sabbath days he argued with them from the scriptures, explaining and quoting passages to prove the necessity for the death of Christ and his rising again from the dead. "This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you," he concluded, "is God's Christ!" Some of them were convinced and threw in their lot with Paul and Silas, and they were joined by a great many believing Greeks and a considerable number of influential women. But the Jews, in a fury of jealousy, got hold of some of the unprincipled loungers of the market place, gathered a crowd together and set the city in an uproar. Then they attacked Jason's house in an attempt to bring Paul and Silas out before the people. When they could not find them they hustled Jason and some of the brothers before the civic authorities, shouting, "These are the men who have turned the world upside down and have now come here, and Jason has taken them into his house. What is more, all these men act against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king called Jesus!" By these words the Jews succeeded in alarming both the people and the authorities, and they only released Jason and the others after binding them over to keep the peace.

17. 10 —followed by encouragement at Beroea

Without delay the brothers dispatched Paul and Silas off to Beroea that night. On their arrival there they went to the Jewish synagogue. The Jews proved more generous-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they accepted the message most eagerly and studied the scriptures every day to see if what they were now being told were true. Many of them became believers, as did a number of Greek women of social standing and quite a number of men. But when the Jews at Thessalonica found out that God's message had been proclaimed by Paul at Beroea as well, they came there too to cause trouble and spread alarm among the people. The brothers at Beroea then sent Paul off at once to make his way to the seacoast, but Silas and Timothy remained there. The men

MAPS

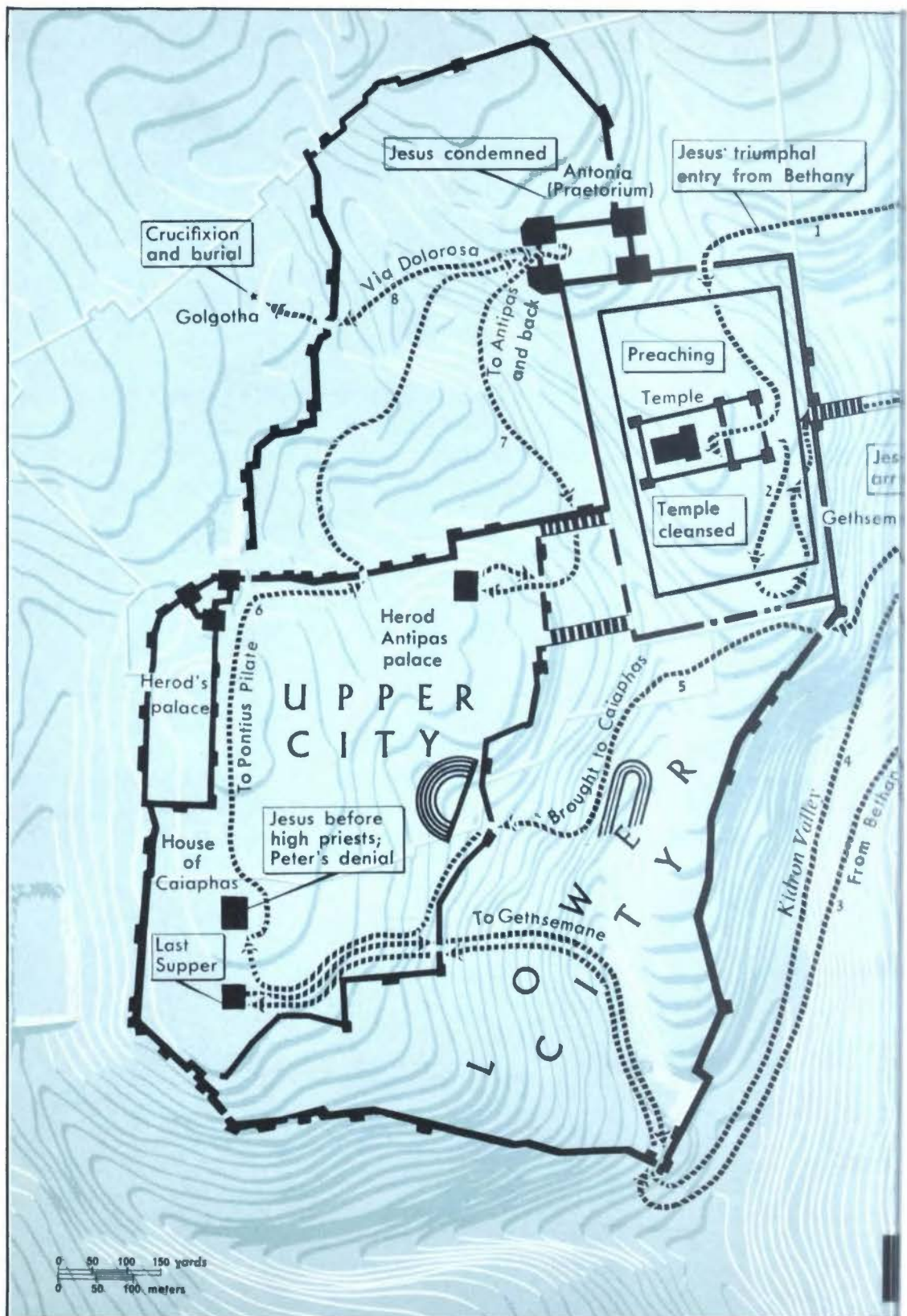


THE HOLY LAND AND COELE-SYRIA IN THE TIME OF JESUS

THE GOSPELS tell that the teachings of Jesus drew crowds from Galilee, Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, the lands beyond the Jordan, Tyre, and Sidon (Mark 3 : 7-8; Matthew 4 : 25 [adding "the Decapolis]" and Luke 6 : 17). The list of countries and towns reflects the area of Jewish settlement in the Holy Land at the time. In Judea, Jerusalem is singled out as the only "city" proper in the land; Idumea had been a separate administrative unit since the days of Alexander Jannaeus, although its inhabitants were merging more and more with the rest of the Jews. The lands "beyond the Jordan," or Perea, were Jewish from the days of Tobiad dynasty on. There were Jewish communities in the cities of the Decapolis which were, however, predominantly Gentile. Finally, the territories of Tyre and Sidon, although predominantly Phoenician, had considerable Jewish populations. Though politically split up between various territories and rulers (all of which were subject to Roman suzerainty), the Jews of the Holy Land were one spiritually and any wave of religious feeling rising in one community could sweep them all. It is significant that Samaria and the coastal cities are absent from the list, though later Christianity made much progress there.

MT. 4: 25; MK. 3: 7-8; LK. 6: 17

- ☐ Territory of Herod Antipas
- ☐ Territory of Herod Philip
- ☐ Territory of the Procurator
of Judaea
- ☐ The Decapolis
- ☐ Kingdom of the Nabateans
- ☐ Cities under the Proconsul
of Syria



MT. 21-27; MK. 11-15
LK. 19: 28-23; JN. 1

JESUS' TRIAL, JUDGMENT AND CRUCIFIXION

JESUS BEGAN his stay in Jerusalem with what is invariably referred to as the triumphal entry, riding on the colt of a she-ass found at a village opposite Bethphage. He was received by the people with cries of "Hosanna" ("Save now!"); they spread their garments on the road and waved palm branches in blessing. After teaching in the Temple he returned to Bethany. The synoptic Gospels place the cleansing of the Temple courts during this second visit. Next day he and his disciples held the Last Supper at a house, the large upper room of which was "furnished and ready" (Mark 14 : 15 and Luke 22 : 12); we may assume that it took place in the rich Upper City of Jerusalem, at the home of one of Jesus' followers. This supper has been held to correspond with the Pascal meal and certainly is colored by Passover motifs. After the Supper, Jesus and the disciples descended to the Kidron valley, to Gethsemane (the "Oil Press") at the foot of the Mount of Olives. There he was arrested by a crowd armed with swords and clubs, led by Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, who had betrayed his master. According to the Gospels Jesus was led to the house of the high priest Caiaphas, there to be interrogated first by the former high priest Annas and then by an informal tribunal presided over by the high priest himself. It was during these events that Peter, who was waiting outside in the courtyard of the palace, thrice denied Jesus.

Jesus was interrogated as to his beliefs; but though his inquisitors regarded his utterances as blasphemous, in the judgment of most scholars they were not empowered to inflict the death penalty. They decided therefore to accuse Jesus before the governor, Pontius Pilate, of a political offense—rebellion against the emperor, implied in Jesus' claim to be "King of the Jews." According to Luke (23 : 6–12) Pilate sent Jesus to Herod Antipas (as "he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction") who sent him back to Pilate. Antipas most probably resided in the old Hasmonean palace, which was the residence of the Herodians on their visits to Jerusalem. Pilate, as governor, would have resided either at the palace of Herod on the western side of the city, or at the fortress of Antonia north of the Temple. As his main reason for staying in Jerusalem was to supervise the Temple during the mass pilgrimage at Passover, we can accept the tradition that the judgment on Jesus was passed at the praetorium set up in Antonia. From there, Jesus was led by Roman soldiers to Golgotha, traditionally a place outside the Second Wall of Jerusalem; here he was executed according to Roman practice, by being affixed to a cross. According to the same tradition he was buried nearby, in a tomb belonging to Joseph of Arimathaea.

THE JEWISH DIASPORA IN THE TIME OF JESUS

ACTS 2: 8–11; 1 MACC. 15: 23; ANT. 14: 213–264;
PAPYRI; INSCRIPTIONS



53 TO 57 A.D.

53 TO 57 A.D.

**ACTS 18: 22—21: 16**

who accompanied Paul took him as far as Athens and returned with instructions for Silas and Timothy to rejoin Paul as soon as possible.

17. 16 Paul is irritated by the idols of Athens

Paul had some days to wait at Athens for Silas and Timothy to arrive, and while he was there his soul was exasperated beyond endurance at the sight of a city so completely idolatrous. He felt compelled to discuss the matter with the Jews in the synagogue as well as with God-fearing gentiles, and he even argued daily in the open market place with the passers-by. While he was speaking there some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers came across him, and some of them remarked,

"What is this cock sparrow trying to say?"

Others said,

"He seems to be trying to proclaim some more gods to us, and outlandish ones at that!"

For Paul was actually proclaiming "Jesus" and "the resurrection." So they got hold of him and conducted him to their council, the Areopagus. There they asked him,

"May we know what this new teaching of yours really is? You talk of matters which sound strange to our ears, and we should like to know what they mean." (For all the Athenians, and even foreign visitors to Athens, had an obsession for any novelty and would spend their whole time talking about or listening to anything new.)

17. 22 Paul's speech to the "gentlemen of Athens"

So Paul got to his feet in the middle of their council, and began, "Gentlemen of Athens, my own eyes tell me that you are in all respects an extremely religious people. For as I made my way here and looked at your shrines I particularly noticed one altar on which were inscribed the words, TO GOD THE UNKNOWN. It is this God whom you are worshiping in ignorance that I am here to proclaim to you! God who made the world and all that is in it, being Lord of both Heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by human hands, nor is he ministered to by human hands, as though he had need of anything—seeing that he is the one who gives to all men life and breath and everything else. From one forefather he has created every race of men to live over the face of the whole earth. He has determined the times of their existence and the limits of their habitation, so that they might search for God, in the hope that they might feel for him and find him—yes, even though he is not far from any one of us. Indeed, it is in him that we live and move and have our being. Some of your own

poets have endorsed this in the words, 'For we are indeed his children.' If then we are the children of God, we ought not to imagine God in terms of gold or silver or stone, contrived by human art or imagination. Now while it is true that God has overlooked the days of ignorance he now commands all men everywhere to repent. For he has fixed a day on which he will judge the whole world in justice by the standard of a man whom he has appointed. That this is so he has guaranteed to all men by raising this man from the dead."

But when his audience heard Paul talk about the resurrection from the dead some of them laughed outright, but others said,

"We should like to hear you speak again on this subject."

So with this mixed reception Paul retired from their assembly. Yet some did in fact join him and accept the faith, including Dionysius a member of the Areopagus, a woman by the name of Damaris, and some others as well.



19. 1 *Ephesus has its own Pentecost*

While Apollos was in Corinth Paul journeyed through the upper parts of the country and arrived at Ephesus. There he discovered some disciples, and he asked them,

"Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

"No," they replied, "we have never even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

"Well then, how were you baptized?" asked Paul.

"We were baptized with John's baptism," they replied.

"John's baptism was a baptism to show a change of heart," Paul explained, "but he always told the people that they must believe in the one who should come after him, that is, in Jesus."

When these men heard this they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and then, when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them and they began to speak with tongues and the inspiration of prophets. (There were about twelve of them in all.)

19. 8 *Paul's two-year ministry at Ephesus*

Then Paul made his way into the synagogue there and for three months he spoke with the utmost confidence, using both argument and persuasion as he talked of the kingdom of God. But when some of them hardened in their attitude toward the message and refused to believe it and, what is more, spoke offensively about the Way in public, Paul left them, and withdrew his disciples, and held daily discussions in the lecture hall of Tyrannus.

He continued this practice for two years, so that all who lived in Asia, both Greeks and Jews, could hear the Lord's message. God gave most unusual demonstrations of power through Paul's hands, so much so that people took to the sick any handkerchiefs or clothing which had been in contact with his body, and they were cured of their diseases and their evil spirits left them.

19. 13 *The violence of evil and the power of "the name"*

But there were some itinerant Jewish exorcists who attempted to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus when dealing with those who had evil spirits. They would say, "I command you in the name of Jesus whom Paul preaches." Seven brothers, sons of a chief priest called Sceva, were engaged in this practice on one occasion, when the evil spirit answered, "Jesus I know, and I am acquainted with Paul, but who on earth are you?" And the man in whom the evil spirit was living sprang at them and overpowered them all with such violence that they rushed out of that house wounded, with their clothes torn off their backs. This incident became known to all the Jews and Greeks who were living in Ephesus, and a great sense of awe came over them all, while the name of the Lord Jesus became highly respected. Many of those who had professed their faith began openly to admit their former practices. A number of those who had previously practiced magic collected their books and burned them publicly. (They estimated the value of these books and found it to be no less than ten thousand dollars.) In this way the Word of the Lord continued to grow irresistibly in power and influence.

19. 21 *Paul speaks of his plans*

After these events Paul set his heart on going to Jerusalem by way of Macedonia and Achaia, remarking,

"After I have been there I must see Rome as well."

Then he dispatched to Macedonia two of his assistants, Timothy and Erastus, while he himself stayed for a while in Asia.

19. 23 *The silversmiths' riot at Ephesus*

Now it happened about this time that a great commotion arose concerning the Way. A man by the name of Demetrius, a silversmith who made silver shrines for Diana, provided considerable business for his craftsmen. He gathered these men together with workers in similar trades, and spoke to them:

"Men," he said, "you all realize how our prosperity depends on this particular work. If you use your eyes and ears you also know that not only in Ephesus but practically throughout Asia this man

Paul has succeeded in changing the minds of a great number of people by telling them that gods made by human hands are not gods at all. Now the danger is not only that this trade of ours might fall into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana herself might come to be lightly regarded. There is a further danger, that her actual majesty might be degraded, she whom the whole of Asia, and indeed the whole world, worships!"

When they heard this they were furiously angry, and shouted, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

Soon the whole city was in an uproar, and on a common impulse the people rushed into the theater dragging with them Gaius and Arisarchus, two Macedonians who were Paul's traveling companions. Paul himself wanted to go in among the crowd, but the disciples would not allow him. Moreover, some high-ranking officials who were Paul's friends sent to him begging him not to risk himself in the theater. Meanwhile some were shouting one thing and some another, and the whole assembly was at sixes and sevens, for most of them had no idea why they had come together at all. A man called Alexander whom the Jews put forward was pushed into the forefront of the crowd, and there, after making a gesture with his hand, he tried to make a speech of defense to the people. But as soon as they realized that he was a Jew they shouted as one man for about two hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

19. 35 *Public authority intervenes*

But when the town clerk had finally quietened the crowd, he said,

"Gentlemen of Ephesus, who in the world could be ignorant of the fact that our city of Ephesus is temple guardian of the great Diana and of the image which fell down from Jupiter himself? These are undeniable facts and it is your plain duty to remain calm and do nothing which you might afterwards regret. For you have brought these men forward, though they are neither plunderers of the temple, nor have they uttered any blasphemy against our goddess. If Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a charge to bring against anyone, well, the courts are open and there are magistrates; let them take legal action. But if you require anything beyond that then it must be resolved in the regular assembly. For all of us are in danger of being charged with rioting over today's events—particularly as we have no real excuse to offer for this commotion."

And with these words he dismissed the assembly.

20. 1 Paul departs on his second journey to Europe

After this disturbance had died down, Paul sent for the disciples and after speaking encouragingly said good-bye to them, and went on his way to Macedonia.

*21. 15 Paul is warmly welcomed at first*

After this we made our preparations and went up to Jerusalem. Some of the disciples from Caesarea accompanied us and they brought us to the house of Mnason, a native of Cyprus and one of the earliest disciples, with whom we were going to stay. On our arrival at Jerusalem the brothers gave us a very warm welcome. On the following day Paul went with us to visit James, and all the elders were present. When he had greeted them he gave them a detailed account of all that God had done among the gentiles through his ministry, and they, on hearing this account, glorified God. Then they said to him,

“You know, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews who have become believers, and that every one of these is a staunch upholder of the Law. They have been told about you—that you teach all Jews who live among the gentiles to disregard the Law of Moses, and tell them not to circumcise their children nor to observe the old customs. What will happen now, for they are simply bound to hear that you have arrived? Now why not follow this suggestion of ours? We have four men here under a vow. Suppose you join them and be purified with them, pay their expenses so that they may have their hair cut short, and then everyone will know there is no truth in the stories about you, but that you yourself observe the Law. As for those gentiles who have believed, we have sent them a letter with our decision that they should abstain from what has been offered to idols, from blood and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality.”

21. 26 But his enemies attempt to murder him

So Paul joined the four men and on the following day, after being purified with them, went into the Temple to give notice of the time when the period of purification would be finished and an offering would be made on behalf of each one of them. The seven days were almost over when the Jews from Asia caught sight of Paul in the Temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him, shouting, “Men of Israel, help! This is the man who is teaching everybody everywhere to despise our people, our Law and this place. Why, he has even brought Greeks into the Temple and he has defiled this holy place!” For they had previously seen

Trophimus the Ephesian with Paul in the city and they had concluded that Paul had brought him into the Temple. The whole city was stirred by this speech and a mob collected who seized Paul and dragged him outside the Temple, and the doors were slammed behind him.

21. 31 Paul is rescued by Roman soldiers

They were trying to kill him when a report reached the ears of the colonel of the regiment that the whole of Jerusalem was in an uproar. Without a moment's delay he took soldiers and centurions and ran down to them. When they saw the colonel and the soldiers they stopped beating Paul. The colonel came up to Paul and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. Then he inquired who the man was and what he had been doing. Some of the crowd shouted one thing and some another, and since he could not be certain of the facts because of the shouting that was going on, the colonel ordered him to be brought to the barracks. When Paul got to the steps he was actually carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob. For the mass of the people followed, shouting, "Kill him!" Just as they were going to take him into the barracks Paul asked the colonel,

"May I say something to you?"

"So you know Greek, do you?" the colonel replied. "Aren't you that Egyptian who not long ago raised a riot and led those four thousand assassins into the desert?"

"I am a Jew," replied Paul. "I am a man of Tarsus, a citizen of that not insignificant city. I ask you to let me speak to the people."

21. 40 Paul attempts to defend himself

On being given permission Paul stood on the steps and made a gesture with his hand to the people. There was a deep hush as he began to speak to them in Hebrew.

"My brothers and my fathers, listen to what I have to say in my own defense."

As soon as they heard him addressing them in Hebrew the silence became intense.

"I myself am a Jew," Paul went on. "I was born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but I was brought up here in this city, I received my training at the feet of Gamaliel, and I was schooled in the strictest observance of our fathers' Law. I was as much on fire with zeal for God as you all are today. I am also the man who persecuted this Way to the death, arresting both men and women and throwing them in prison, as the High Priest and the whole council can readily testify. Indeed, it was after receiving letters from them

to their brothers in Damascus that I was on my way to that city, intending to arrest any followers of the Way I could find there and bring them back to Jerusalem for punishment. Then this happened to me. As I was on my journey and getting near to Damascus, about midday a great light from Heaven suddenly blazed around me. I fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' I replied, 'Who are you, Lord?' He said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting.' My companions naturally saw the light, but they did not hear the voice of the one who was talking to me. 'What am I to do, Lord?' I asked. And the Lord told me, 'Get up and go to Damascus and there you will be told of all that has been determined for you to do.' I was blinded by the brightness of that light and my companions had to take me by the hand as we went on to Damascus. There, there was a man called Ananias, a reverent observer of the Law and a man highly respected by all the Jews who lived there. He came to visit me and as he stood by my side said, 'Saul, brother, you may see again!' At once I regained my sight and looked up at him. 'The God of our fathers,' he went on, 'has chosen you to know his will, to see the righteous one, to hear words from his own lips, so that you may become his witness before all men of what you have seen and heard. And now what are you waiting for? Get up and be baptized! Be clean from your sins as you call on his name.'

22. 17 *Paul claims that God sent him to the gentiles*

"Then it happened that after my return to Jerusalem, while I was at prayer in the Temple, unconscious of everything else, I saw him and he said to me, 'Make haste and leave Jerusalem at once, for they will not accept your testimony about me.' And I said, 'But, Lord, they know how I have been through all the synagogues imprisoning and beating all those who believe in you. They know also that when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed I stood by, giving my approval—why, I was even holding in my arms the outer garments of those who killed him.' But he said to me, 'Go, for I will send you far away to the gentiles.'"

22. 22 *The consequence of Paul's speech*

They had listened to him until he said this, but now they raised a great shout.

"Kill him, and rid the earth of such a man! He is not fit to live!"

As they were yelling and ripping their clothes and hurling dust into the air, the colonel gave orders to bring Paul into the barracks and directed that he should be examined by scourging, so that he might discover the reason for such an uproar against him. But

when they had strapped him up, Paul spoke to the centurion standing by:

"Is it legal for you to flog a man who is a Roman citizen, and untried at that?"

On hearing this the centurion went in to the colonel and reported to him saying,

"Do you realize what you were about to do? This man is a Roman citizen!"

Then the colonel himself came up to Paul and said,

"Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?"

And he said,

"Yes."

Whereupon the colonel replied,

"It cost me a good deal to get my citizenship."

"Ah," replied Paul, "but I was born a citizen."

Then those who had been about to examine him left hurriedly, while even the colonel himself was alarmed at discovering that Paul was a Roman and that he had had him bound.



27. 1 *The last journey begins*

As soon as it was decided that we should sail away to Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were turned over to a centurion named Julius, of the emperor's own regiment. We embarked on a ship hailing from Adramyttium, bound for the Asian ports, and set sail. Among our company was Aristarchus. On the following day we put in at Sidon, where Julius treated Paul most considerately by allowing him to visit his friends and accept their hospitality. From Sidon we put to sea again and sailed to leeward of Cyprus, since the wind was against us. Then, when we had crossed the gulf that lies off the coasts of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we arrived at Myra in Lycia. There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship bound for Italy and put us aboard her. For several days we beat slowly up to windward and only just succeeded in arriving off Cnidus. Then, since the wind was still blowing against us, we sailed under the lee of Crete, and rounded Cape Salmone. Coasting along with difficulty we came to a place called Fair Havens, near which is the city of Lasea. We had by now lost a great deal of time and sailing had already become dangerous as it was so late in the year.

27. 9b *Paul's warning is disregarded*

So Paul warned them, and said,

"Men, I can see that this voyage is likely to result in damage and considerable loss—not only to ship and cargo, but even of our own lives as well."

But Julius paid more attention to the helmsman and the captain than to Paul's words of warning. Moreover, since the harbor is unsuitable for a ship to winter in, the majority were in favor of setting sail again in the hope of reaching Phoenix and wintering there. Phoenix is a harbor in Crete, facing southwest and northwest. So, when a moderate breeze sprang up, thinking they had obtained just what they wanted, they weighed anchor and coasted along, hugging the shores of Crete. But before long a terrific gale, which they called a northeaster, swept down upon us from the land. The ship was caught by it and since she could not be brought up into the wind we had to let her fall off and run before it. Then, running under the lee of a small island called Clauda, we managed with some difficulty to secure the ship's boat. After hoisting it aboard they used cables to brace the ship. To add to the difficulties they were afraid all the time of drifting onto the Syrtis banks, so they shortened sail and lay to, drifting. The next day, as we were still at the mercy of the violent storm, they began to throw cargo overboard. On the third day with their own hands they threw the ship's tackle over the side. Then, when for many days there was no glimpse of sun or stars and we were still in the grip of the gale, all hope of our being saved was given up.

27. 21 *Paul's practical courage and faith*

Nobody had eaten for some time, when Paul came forward among the men and said,

"Men, you should have listened to me and not set sail from Crete and suffered this damage and loss. However, now I beg you to keep up your spirits for no one's life is going to be lost, though we shall lose the ship. I know this because last night, the angel of God to whom I belong, and whom I serve, stood by me and said, 'Have no fear, Paul! You must stand before Caesar. And God, as a mark of his favor toward you, has granted you the lives of those who are sailing with you.' Take courage then, men, for I believe God, and I am certain that everything will happen exactly as I have been told. But we shall have to run the ship ashore on some island."

27. 27 *At last we near land*

On the fourteenth night of the storm, as we were drifting in the Adriatic, about midnight the sailors sensed that we were nearing land. Indeed, when they sounded they found twenty fathoms, and then after sailing on only a little way they sounded again and found fifteen. So, for fear that we might be hurled on the rocks, they threw out four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight. The sailors wanted to desert the ship and they got as far as

letting a boat down into the sea, pretending that they were going to run out anchors from the bow. But Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers,

“Unless these men stay aboard the ship there is no hope of your being saved.”

At this the soldiers cut the ropes of the boat and let her fall away.

27. 33 *Paul's sturdy common sense*

Then while everyone waited for the day to break Paul urged them to take some food, saying,

“For two weeks now you’ve had no food—you haven’t had a bite while you’ve been on watch. Now take some food, I beg you—you need it for your own well-being, for not a hair of anyone’s head will be lost.”

When he had said this he took some bread and, after thanking God before them all, he broke it and began to eat. This raised everybody’s spirits and they began to take food themselves. There were about two hundred and seventy-six of us all told aboard that ship. When they had eaten enough they lightened the ship by throwing the grain over the side.

27. 39 *Land at last—but we lose the ship*

When daylight came no one recognized the land. But they made out a bay with a sandy shore where they planned to beach the ship if they could. So they cut away the anchors and left them in the sea, and at the same time cut the ropes which held the steering oars. They then hoisted the foresail to catch the wind and made for the beach. But they struck a shoal and the ship ran aground. The bow stuck fast, while the stern began to break up under the strain. The soldiers’ plan had been to kill the prisoners in case any of them should try to swim to shore and escape. But the centurion, in his desire to save Paul, put a stop to this, and gave orders that all those who could swim should jump overboard first and get to land, while the rest should follow, some on planks and others on the wreckage of the ship. So it came true that everyone reached the shore in safety.

28. 1 *A small incident establishes Paul's reputation*

After our escape we discovered that the island was called Melita. The natives treated us with uncommon kindness. Because of the driving rain and the cold they lit a fire and made us all welcome. Then when Paul had collected a large bundle of sticks and was about to put it on the fire, a viper driven out by the heat fastened itself on his hand. When the natives saw the creature hanging from

his hand they said to each other, "This man is obviously a murderer. He has escaped from the sea but justice will not let him live." But Paul shook off the viper into the fire without suffering any ill effect. Naturally they expected him to swell up or suddenly fall down dead, but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing untoward happen to him, they changed their minds and kept saying that he was a god.

28. 7 *Paul's acts of healing: the islanders' gratitude*

In that part of the island were estates belonging to the governor, whose name was Publius. This man welcomed us and entertained us most kindly for three days. Now it happened that Publius' father was lying ill with fever and dysentery. Paul visited him and after prayer laid his hands on him and healed him. After that all the other sick people on the island came forward and were cured. Consequently they loaded us with presents, and when the time came for us to sail they provided us with everything we needed.

28. 11 *Spring returns and we resume our journey*

It was no less than three months later that we set sail in an Alexandrian ship which had wintered in the island, a ship that had the heavenly twins as her figurehead. We put in at Syracuse and stayed there three days, and from there we tacked round to Rhegium. A day later the south wind sprang up and we sailed to Puteoli, reaching it in only two days. There we found some of the brothers and they begged us to stay a week with them, and so we finally came to Rome.

28. 15 *A Christian welcome awaits us in the capital*

The brothers there had heard about us and came out from the city to meet us, as far as the Market of Appius and the Three Taverns. When Paul saw them he thanked God and his spirits rose. When we reached Rome Paul was given permission to live alone with the soldier who was guarding him.

28. 17 *Paul explains himself frankly to the Jews in Rome*

Three days later Paul invited the leading Jews to meet him, and when they arrived he spoke to them:

"Men and brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our forefathers, I was handed over to the Romans as a prisoner in Jerusalem. They examined me and were prepared to release me, since they found me guilty of nothing deserving the death penalty. But the attacks of the Jews there forced me to appeal to Caesar—not that I had any charge to make against my own nation. But it is because of this accusation of the

Jews that I have asked to see you and talk matters over with you. In actual fact it is on account of the hope of Israel that I am here in chains."

But they replied,

"We have received no letters about you from Judaea, nor have any of the brothers who have arrived here said anything, officially or unofficially, against you. We want to hear you state your views, although as far as this sect is concerned we do know that serious objections have been raised to it everywhere."

28. 23 *Paul's earnest and prolonged effort to win his own people for Christ*

When they had arranged a day for him they came to his lodging in great numbers. From morning till evening he explained the kingdom of God to them, giving his personal testimony, trying to persuade them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and the Prophets. As a result several of them were won over by his words, but others would not believe. When they could not reach any agreement among themselves and began to go away, Paul added as a parting shot, "How rightly did the Holy Spirit speak to your forefathers through the prophet Isaiah when he said,

Go thou unto this people, and say,
By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand;
And seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive:
For this people's heart is waxed gross,
And their ears are dull of hearing,
And their eyes they have closed;
Lest haply they should perceive with their eyes,
And hear with their ears,
And understand with their heart,
And should turn again,
And I should heal them.

"Let it be plainly understood then that this salvation of our God has been sent to the gentiles, and they at least will listen to it!"

28. 30 *The last glimpse of Paul . . .*

So Paul stayed for two full years in his own rented apartment welcoming all who came to see him. He proclaimed to them all the kingdom of God and gave them the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ with the utmost freedom and without hindrance from anyone.

Chapter 5



THE EARLIER LETTERS OF PAUL

The Christian community might have lived for a few years and died as a Jewish sect, if it had not reached converts in the Greco-Roman world. Paul appears to have been the chief instrument through which Christianity developed a universal appeal.

THE CONVERSION OF SAUL OF TARSUS (A.D. 33)

It was partly under the influence of the martyrdom of Stephen (Acts 6:15; 7:58–60) that Saul of Tarsus was converted to the new faith. He was a Jew from the Dispersion, at once proud of his aristocratic blood (Philippians 3:4–5) and of his Roman citizenship (Acts 16:37; 22:25), of his native city (Acts 21:39) and of his theological training at the feet of the Jewish teacher Gamaliel (Acts 22:3; Philippians 3:5).

Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia in Asia Minor, was “no mean city” (Acts 21:39). Already at the time of the geographer Strabo (54 B.C.–A.D. 24), the fame of the philosophers of Tarsus surpassed that of the masters of Alexandria and Athens. Cicero had lived there for a few months while he was governor of Cilicia (51–50 B.C.), and the Emperor Augustus had granted the city the title of metropolis. Placed in the vicinity of the main ways of sea and land communication between the East and the West, Tarsus was a commercial as well as an intellectual center.

Born in such surroundings and educated in both the Jewish

and Hellenistic cultures, Saul of Tarsus was unusually well prepared to become "the apostle of the gentiles."

At first, as he later confessed, Saul the Pharisee was "animated with an excessive zeal for the tradition of [his] fathers" (Galatians 1:14). He therefore persecuted the Christians. His conversion made him at once a Christian and a missionary. Such a complete reversal of attitude on his part was apparently brought about by a psychological upheaval of extreme violence. The three records of the scene, on the road to Damascus, which are found in the book of Acts (9:3-7; 22:4-11; 26:12-19) substantially agree with the testimony or the allusions of Saul himself (Galatians 1:13-16; I Corinthians 9:1; 15:8; II Corinthians 4:6).

Modern students of religious psychology have attempted to show that Saul's conversion was the result of a long emotional and mental process, and this may well have been the case. The vision of the risen Christ in glory appears to have constituted the culminating point of the Pharisee's religious agonies within himself.

Saul retired to Arabia for a two-year period of study and meditation, and afterwards returned to his home in Cilicia. It is not clear from the conflicting evidence (Galatians 1:17-24; compare Acts 9:19-30), whether or not he preached the gospel during these years of preparation (A.D. 35-38).

THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY OF PAUL (ABOUT A.D. 40-45)

Little is known of Barnabas (Acts 4:36), who was the uncle of John-Mark (Acts 12:12; 13:5). This colorful Cypriot introduced Saul of Tarsus to the suspicious apostles (Acts 9:27) and trained the converted Pharisee for the missionary task (Acts 11:22-26). After a year of collaboration in Antioch, Barnabas and Saul together undertook a journey to Cyprus and Galatia (Acts 13:1-14:28). After his meeting with the Roman proconsul Sergius Paulus, in Cyprus, the young apostle changed his Jewish name "Saul" to the Roman name "Paul" (Acts 13:13).

THE COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM (ABOUT A.D. 46)

Many gentiles accepted the gospel, but Christians of Jewish origin refused to recognize them as full members of their fellow-

ship unless these converts would first submit to the Jewish law of circumcision. The Christian church met its first major crisis. The issue at stake was in fact whether Christianity would remain a Jewish sect or become emancipated from the ritual aspect of Judaism.

An agreement was reached at the first great Synod of the church in Jerusalem, when the delegates from Antioch, Barnabas, Paul, and his young Greek friend, an uncircumcised Christian named Titus, on the one hand, met with the ancient "pillars" of the Jerusalem church, Peter, John, and James, the brother of Jesus, on the other hand.

The two records of the council differ in details (Acts 15:1-35; compare Galatians 2:1-10), but the leaders of the conservative Jewish-Christian party and the Antiochian "modernists" or "liberals" reached an accord on the crucial problem. The requirement of circumcision was waived. Paul was now free to undertake his missionary travels.

Under the impact of his superior intellect and ebullient devotion to the gospel, Christianity went forward as a world religion.

THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY OF PAUL

(A.D. 49-50)

After the conference of Jerusalem, Barnabas and Paul returned to Antioch. Barnabas went back to Cyprus alone, while Paul paid a second visit to the churches of Galatia. Receiving in a vision the call to cross the Aegean Sea and go to Europe, he left Asia Minor and sailed for Macedonia and Greece (Acts 15:36-16:10). He preached the gospel at Philippi, Thessalonica, and Athens (Acts 16:11-17:34), and settled for almost two years in the large city of Corinth (Acts 17:1-18). It was from there that he wrote two short notes to the Christians of Thessalonica.

THE FIRST LETTER TO THE THESSALONIANS (A.D. 50)

Like most of the other letters, the first note to the Thessalonians was not a book but simply an occasional piece of writing. Paul wished to correct a misunderstanding which he heard had crept into their minds after his departure from their city. Some of their

numbers had since then died. What would happen to the dead? Paul replied, that, on awakening from their sleep, they would rise at the coming of the Lord, and that all together they would enter the heavenly kingdom.

THE SECOND LETTER OF PAUL TO THE THESSALONIANS (A.D. 51)

A few weeks or months after he wrote the first note to the Christians of Thessalonica, Paul wrote again in order to restrain their religious impatience. He had heard that some of them, in their eagerness for the end of the world, had stopped working. Paul recommended them some common sense.

THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY OF PAUL (A.D. 52-55)

Having returned from Corinth to Jerusalem (A.D. 52), Paul spent "some time" at Antioch, the starting point of all his travels (Acts 18:18-22). He then undertook a third missionary journey through Asia Minor.

For two or three years, he stayed in the splendid city of Ephesus which boasted one of the Seven Wonders of the World, the Temple of Artemis. There he suffered many hardships, probably mistreatment by the police and uncertainties about his own faith (Acts 19:1-20:1). It was from Ephesus that he wrote, "I bear the *stigmata* ('marks') of Jesus on my body" (Galatians 6:17); at a later time, he also wrote that he had fought against wild beasts in Ephesus (I Corinthians 15:32), and received there "a thorn in the flesh" (II Corinthians 12:7).

During these years, Paul also had to fight enemies within the church itself. A crisis threatened the life of the Galatian communities, and several incidents shattered the well-being of the Christians of Corinth. Detained in Ephesus by his work, Paul sent letters, one to the east across the mountains of Asia Minor to Galatia, and probably four others, to the west, across the Aegean Sea to Corinth. These letters show a sharp contrast to the two short notes he had written earlier to Thessalonica from Corinth. Then, he had written with calm, tact, and cheerfulness (see I Thessalonians 4:9, for example). Now, he was carried away with anxiety and passion.

THE LETTER TO THE GALATIANS (A.D. 54)

Some Jewish Christians, probably coming from Jerusalem, had persuaded the new converts of Galatia to accept the law of circumcision as a condition of their new faith. Pagans had to become Jews before they could accept the Christian way of life. The issue was still the same as that which had presumably been solved at the Synod of Jerusalem a few years before.

When Paul heard of the Galatians' cowardice, he did not contain his indignation. For him, a Christian was not a man who could bow superficially to details of ritual, for obedience to exterior form did not bind the inner person. To be a Christian, one had to become a newly born man.

First, Paul claimed the right to speak as an apostle, for he had received the call from Jesus himself (1:1, 11-12). It was God, not the men of Jerusalem, who had revealed his Son to him (1:13-17). This conviction had enabled him—at the conference of Jerusalem—to show that the gospel was free from the ritual parts of the Jewish law (2:1-10).

Second, those Christians who thought that only the race of Abraham or his adopted sons (through the ritual of circumcision) belonged to the people of God, had not understood the mystery of dying and living with Christ (2:20; compare 3:6-7; Matthew 3:9). If the right communion with God can be achieved by obedience to the Jewish law, then the grace of God was superfluous, and Jesus had died in vain (2:15-21).

Third, the "senseless and bewitched Galatians" should see that the Jewish law is a valuable guardian or tutor, but that those who are "clothed" in Christ "as in a mantle," no longer need those regulations because they have become heirs to Abraham, and even the sons of God (3:21-25; 4:1-7).

A *threefold conclusion* arises from Paul's argument:

1. All men are *equal* in Christ, and this principle of equality applies to Jews and Greeks, men and women, masters and slaves (3:28);
2. All men are *free* in Christ, for they are emancipated from the yoke of the Jewish ritual (5:1-13);
3. All men are *brothers* in Christ, and the principle of brotherhood prevents the freedom of the gospel from becoming anarchy.

The moral part of the Jewish law remains valid, as a symbol of brotherly responsibility (5:13-26). Equality, liberty, and fraternity are the fruit of the new birth.

The letter to the Galatians was dictated to a secretary, and Paul added a special note in his "own handwriting": "There is only one important thing, to be a new creature!" (6:15). This document proved to be the most influential in the history of the early church. It has been called the "Magna Carta" of Christianity.

THE FOUR LETTERS OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS (A.D. 55-56)

THE CORINTHIAN CRISIS. To the Galatians, Paul had presented the emancipation of the gospel from Judaism. With the Corinthians, he faced a situation which led him to seek applications of the gospel to special cases. The letter to the Galatians laid the basis for Christian theology. The letters to the Corinthians represented the beginning of applied Christian ethics.

The inhabitants of Corinth were noted for their dissolute morals, even in the Roman Empire. The Greek expression "to Corinthianize" had become a common way of saying "to lead a disorderly life." Cultural discussions were probably quite entertaining, but they produced among them passionate factions (Acts 18:23-28). Those Corinthians who became Christians carried within the church their argumentative dissensions (I Corinthians 3:4).

Paul wrote to them at least four times:

The first letter was one of *advice*, written from Ephesus. It is now lost (I Corinthians 5:9).

The second letter (known today as "First Corinthians") was one of *exhortation*, also written from Ephesus in early A.D. 55 (I Corinthians 16:8-9).

The third letter was one of *rebuke* (now the second part of II Corinthians, 10:1-13:14), written from Macedonia in A.D. 56, after a second visit to Corinth (2 Corinthians 12:14; 14:1-2; see Acts 20:4).

The fourth letter was one of *reconciliation* (now the first part of 2 Corinthians, 1:1-9:15), written also from Macedonia in A.D. 56 (2 Corinthians 9:2), some time before Paul's departure for Asia and Jerusalem (Acts 21:1-17). The fourth letter makes clear allusions to the third (2 Corinthians 2:3, 4; 7:8-12).

THE SECOND LETTER (I CORINTHIANS). First, in view of the dissensions which tore apart the church of Corinth, Paul recom-

mends unity (1:1—4:21). Second, he deals with a number of practical issues related to the moral behavior of some members. He exalts the beauty of marriage (7:3—7) and opposes divorce but not a second marriage (7:29—40). He thinks that meat consecrated to pagan gods may be eaten by Christians, but that freedom must be exercised with caution, for the weak brothers should not be unduly shocked. "All things are lawful, but not all things are helpful" (10:23). Third, Paul recommends that the Lord's supper be celebrated with order and dignity (11:17—34), and he warns that the virtue of brotherly love is far more important than strange spiritual gifts, such as speaking in heavenly tongues (12:1—14:40). The letter ends with a picture of the resurrection of the dead (15:1—58) and an appeal for the support of the poor in the Jerusalem church (16:1—24).

THE THIRD LETTER (II CORINTHIANS 10:1—13:14). Stirred by Jewish Christians, some of the members of the church in Corinth questioned Paul's claim to be an apostle of Christ. He defends himself with vehemence and is led to bare his inner life with a candor which makes of this letter an extraordinary example of religious confession, comparable to those of the prophet Jeremiah or of the later Christian saints.

THE FOURTH LETTER (2 CORINTHIANS 1:1—9:15). At last, Paul's adversaries in Corinth were won back to his friendship, probably on account of his third letter, and also of the visit which his disciple Titus made to them (2 Corinthians 7:6, 7, 13—16). Paul apologizes for the harshness of his words (1:1—3:3). He now fears that he will die before the coming of the Lord, but knows that eternal life begins even now before death (4:4—5:21).

THE FIRST LETTER TO THE CHRISTIANS AT THESSALONICA

To the church of the Thessalonians, founded on God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, grace and peace from Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy.

1. 2 Your faith cheers us and encourages many others

We are always thankful as we pray for you all, for we never forget that your faith has meant solid achievement, your love has meant hard work, and the hope that you have in our Lord Jesus Christ means sheer dogged endurance in the life that you live before God, the Father of us all.

We know that God not only loves you but has selected you for a special purpose. For we remember how our gospel came to you not as mere words, but as a message with power behind it—the effectual power, in fact, of the Holy Spirit. You know how we lived among you. You remember how you set yourselves to copy us, and through us, the Lord himself. You remember how, although accepting the message meant bitter persecution, yet you experienced the joy of the Holy Spirit. You thus became examples to all who believe in Macedonia and Achaia. You have become a sort of sounding board from which the Word of the Lord has rung out, not only in Macedonia and Achaia but everywhere that the story of your faith in God has become known. We find we don't have to tell people about it. They tell *us* the story of our coming to you: how you turned from idols to serve the true living God, and how your whole lives now look forward to the coming of his Son from Heaven—the Son Jesus, whom God raised from the dead, and who personally delivered us from the judgment which hung over our heads.

*4. 13 God's message regarding those who have died*

Now we don't want you, my brothers, to be in any doubt about those who "fall asleep" in death, or to grieve over them like men who have no hope. After all, if we believe that Jesus died and rose again from death, then we can believe that God will just as surely bring with Jesus all who are "asleep" in him. Here we have a definite message from the Lord. It is that those who are still living when he comes will not in any way precede those who have previously fallen asleep. One word of command, one shout from the archangel, one blast from the trumpet of God and the Lord himself will come down from Heaven! Those who have died in Christ will be the first to rise, and then we who are still living on the earth will be swept up with them into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And after that we shall be with him for ever. So by all means use this message to encourage one another.



THE SECOND LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CHRISTIANS AT THESSALONICA



3. 6 *Remember our example: everyone should do his fair share of work*

One further order we must give you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ: don't associate with the brother whose life is undisciplined, and who despises the teaching we gave you. You know well that we ourselves are your examples here, and that our lives among you were never undisciplined. We did not eat anyone's food without paying for it. In fact we toiled and labored night and day to avoid being the slightest expense to any of you. This was not because we had no right to ask our necessities of you, but because we wanted to set you an example. When we were actually with you we gave you this principle to work on: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." Now we hear that you have some among you living quite undisciplined lives, never doing a stroke of work, and busy only in other people's affairs. Our order to such men, indeed our appeal by the Lord Jesus Christ, is to settle down to work and eat the food they have earned themselves.

And the rest of you—don't get tired of honest work! If anyone refuses to obey the command given above, mark that man; do not associate with him until he is ashamed of himself. I don't mean, of course, treat him as an enemy, but reprimand him as a brother.

3. 16 *My blessing on you all!*

Now may the Lord of peace personally give you his peace at all times and in all ways. The Lord be with you all.

This is the farewell message of PAUL, written in my own writing—my "mark" on all my letters. This is how I write.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

THE LETTER TO THE CHRISTIANS IN GALATIA

I, Paul, who am appointed and commissioned a messenger not by man but by Jesus Christ and God the Father (who raised him from the dead), I and all the brothers with me send the churches in Galatia greeting. Grace and peace to you from God the Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to the will of our God and Father gave himself for our sins and thereby rescued us from the present evil world order. To him be glory for ever and ever!

1. 6 *The gospel is God's truth: men must not dare to pervert it*

I am amazed that you have so quickly transferred your allegiance from him who called you in the grace of Christ to another "gospel"! Not, of course, that it is or ever could be another gospel, but there are obviously men who are upsetting your faith with a travesty of the gospel of Christ. Yet I say that if I, or an angel from Heaven, were to preach to you any other gospel than the one you have heard, may he be damned! You have heard me say it before, and now I put it down in black and white—may anybody who preaches any other gospel than the one you have already heard be a damned soul! (Does that make you think now that I am serving man's interests or God's? If I were trying to win human approval I should never be Christ's servant.)

1. 11 *The gospel was given to me by Christ himself, and not by any human agency, as my story will show*

The gospel I preach to you is no human invention. No man gave it to me, no man taught it to me; it came to me as a direct revelation from Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my past career in the Jewish religion, how I persecuted the church of God with fanatical zeal and, in fact, did my best to destroy it. I was ahead of most of my contemporaries in the Jewish religion, and had a greater enthusiasm for the old traditions. But when the time came for God (who had chosen me from the moment of

my birth, and then called me by his grace) to reveal his Son within me so that I might proclaim him to the non-Jewish world, I did not, as might have been expected, talk over the matter with any human being. I did not even go to Jerusalem to meet those who were God's messengers before me—no, I went away to Arabia and later came back to Damascus. It was not until three years later that I went up to Jerusalem to see Cephas, and I only stayed with him just over a fortnight. I did not meet any of the other messengers, except James, the Lord's brother.

All this that I am telling you is, I assure you before God, the plain truth. Later, I visited districts in Syria and Cilicia, but I was still personally unknown to the churches of Judea. All they knew of me, in fact, was the saying: "The man who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." And they thanked God for what had happened to me.

2. *I Years later I met church leaders in Jerusalem: no criticism of my gospel was made*

Fourteen years later, I went up to Jerusalem again, this time with Barnabas, and we took Titus with us. My visit on this occasion was by divine command, and I gave a full exposition of the gospel which I preach among the gentiles. I did this first in private conference with the church leaders, to make sure that what I had done and proposed doing was acceptable to them. Not one of them intimated that Titus, because he was a Greek, ought to be circumcised. In fact, the suggestion would never have arisen but for the presence of some pseudo-Christians, who wormed their way into our meeting to spy on the liberty we enjoy in Christ Jesus, and then attempted to tie us up with rules and regulations. We did not give those men an inch, for the truth of the gospel for you and all gentiles was at stake. And as far as the leaders of the conference were concerned (I neither know nor care what their exact position was: God is not impressed with a man's office), they had nothing to add to my gospel. In fact they recognized that the gospel for the uncircumcised was as much my commission as the gospel for the circumcised was Peter's. For the God who had done such great work in Peter's ministry for the Jews was plainly doing the same in my ministry for the gentiles. When, therefore, James, Cephas, and John (who were the recognized "pillars" of the church there) saw how God had given me his grace, they held out to Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship, in full agreement that our mission was to the gentiles and theirs to the Jews. The only suggestion they made was that we should not forget the poor—and with this I was, of course, only too ready to agree.

2. *II I had once to defend the truth of the gospel even against a church leader*

Later, however, when Cephas came to Antioch I had to oppose him publicly, for he was then plainly in the wrong. It happened like this. Until the arrival of some of James' companions, he, Peter, was in the habit of eating his meals with the gentiles. After they came, however, he withdrew and ate separately from the gentiles—out of sheer fear of what the Jews might think. The other Jewish Christians carried out a similar piece of deception, and the force of their bad example was so great that even Barnabas was affected by it. But when I saw that this behavior was a contradiction of the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas so that everyone could hear, "If you, who are a Jew, do not live like a Jew but like a gentile, why on earth do you try to make gentiles live like Jews?" And then I went on to explain that we, who are Jews by birth and not gentile sinners, know that a man is justified not by performing what the Law commands but by faith in Jesus Christ. We ourselves are justified by our faith and not by our obedience to the Law, for we have recognized that no one can achieve justification by doing the "works of the Law." Now if, as we seek the real truth about justification, we find we are as much sinners as the gentiles, does that mean that Christ makes us sinners? Of course not! But if I attempt to build again the whole structure of justification by the Law then I do, in earnest, make myself a sinner. For under the Law I "died," and now I am dead to the Law's demands so that I may live for God. As far as the Law is concerned I may consider that I died on the cross with Christ. And my present life is not that of the old "I," but the living Christ within me. The bodily life I now live, I live believing in the Son of God, who loved me and sacrificed himself for me. Consequently I refuse to stultify the grace of God by reverting to the Law. For if righteousness were possible under the Law then Christ died for nothing!

3. *I What has happened to your life of faith?*

O you dear idiots of Galatia, who saw Jesus Christ the crucified so plainly, who has been casting a spell over you? I shall ask you one simple question: Did you receive the Spirit by trying to keep the Law or by believing the message of the gospel? Surely you can't be so idiotic as to think that a man begins his spiritual life in the Spirit and then completes it by reverting to outward observances? Has all your painful experience brought you nowhere? I simply cannot believe it of you! Does God, who gives you his Spirit and works miracles among you, do these things

because you have obeyed the Law or because you have believed the gospel? Ask yourselves that.

3. 6 *The futility of trying to be justified by the Law: the promises to men of faith*

You can go right back to Abraham to see the principle of faith in God. He, we are told, "believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness." Can you not see, then, that all those who "believe God" are the real "sons of Abraham"? The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the gentiles "by faith," really proclaimed the gospel centuries ago in the words spoken to Abraham, "In thee shall all nations be blessed." All men of faith share the blessing of Abraham who "believed God."



3. 23 *By faith we are rescued from the Law and become sons of God*

Before the coming of faith we were all imprisoned under the power of the Law, with our only hope of deliverance the faith that was to be shown to us. Or, to change the metaphor, the Law was like a strict governess in charge of us until we went to the school of Christ and learned to be justified by faith in him. Once we had that faith we were completely free from the governess' authority. For now that you have faith in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God. All of you who were baptized "into" Christ have put on the family likeness of Christ. Gone is the distinction between Jew and Greek, slave and free man, male and female—you are all one in Christ Jesus! And if you belong to Christ, you are true descendants of Abraham, you are true heirs of his promise.

But you must realize that so long as an heir is a child, though he is destined to be master of everything, he is, in practice, no different from a servant. He has to obey a guardian or trustee until the time which his father has chosen for him to receive his inheritance. So is it with us: while we were "children" we lived under the authority of basic moral principles. But when the proper time came God sent his Son, born of a human mother and born under the jurisdiction of the Law, that he might redeem those who were under the authority of the Law and lead us into becoming, by adoption, true sons of God. It is because you really are his sons that God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts to cry "Father, dear Father." You, my brother, are not a servant any longer; through God you are a *son*. And, if you are a son, then you are certainly an heir.

4. 8 *Consider your own progress: do you want to go backward?*

At one time when you had no knowledge of God, you were under the authority of gods who had no real existence. But now that you have come to know God, or rather, are known by him, how can you revert to dead and sterile principles and consent to be under their power all over again? Your religion is beginning to be a matter of observing certain days or months or seasons or years. Frankly, you stagger me, you make me wonder if all my efforts over you have been wasted!



It is to freedom that you have been called, my brothers. Only be careful that freedom does not become mere opportunity for your lower nature. You should be free to serve one another in love. For after all, the whole Law toward others is summed up by this one command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

But if freedom means merely that you are free to attack and tear one another to pieces, be careful that it doesn't mean that between you, you destroy your fellowship altogether!

5. 16 *The way to live in freedom is by the Spirit*

Here is my advice. Live your whole life in the Spirit and you will not satisfy the desires of your lower nature. For the whole energy of the lower nature is set against the Spirit, while the whole power of the Spirit is contrary to the lower nature. Here is the conflict, and that is why you are not free to do what you want to do. But if you follow the leading of the Spirit, you stand clear of the Law.

The activities of the lower nature are obvious. Here is a list: sexual immorality, impurity of mind, sensuality, worship of false gods, witchcraft, hatred, quarreling, jealousy, bad temper, rivalry, factions, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like that. I solemnly assure you, as I did before, that those who indulge in such things will never inherit God's kingdom. The Spirit, however, produces in human life fruits such as these: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, fidelity, tolerance, and self-control—and no law exists against any of them.

Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified their old nature with all that it loved and lusted for. If our lives are centered in the Spirit, let us be guided by the Spirit. Let us not be ambitious for our own reputations, for that only means making one another jealous.

6. I *Some practical wisdom*

Even if a man should be detected in some sin, my brothers, the spiritual ones among you should quietly set him back on the right path, not with any feeling of superiority but being yourselves on guard against temptation. Carry one another's burdens and so live out the law of Christ.

If a man thinks he is "somebody," he is deceiving himself, for that very thought proves that he is nobody. Let every man learn to assess properly the value of his own work and he can then be glad when he has done something worth doing without depending on the approval of others. For every man must "shoulder his own pack."

The man under Christian instruction should be willing to contribute toward the livelihood of his teacher.

6. 7 *The inevitability of life's harvest*

Don't be under any illusion: you cannot make a fool of God! A man's harvest in life will depend entirely on what he sows. If he sows for his own lower nature his harvest will be the decay and death of his own nature. But if he sows for the Spirit he will reap the harvest of everlasting life by the Spirit. Let us not grow tired of doing good, for, unless we throw in our hand, the ultimate harvest is assured. Let us then do good to all men as opportunity offers, especially to those who belong to the Christian household.

6. II *A final appeal, in my own handwriting*

Look at these huge letters* I am making in writing these words to you with my own hand!

These men who are always urging you to be circumcised—what are they after? They want to present a pleasing front to the world and they want to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ. For even those who have been circumcised do not themselves keep the Law. But they want you circumcised so that they may be able to boast about your submission to their ruling. Yet God forbid that I should boast about anything or anybody except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, which means that the world is a dead thing to me and I am a dead man to the world! For in Christ it is not circumcision or uncircumcision that counts, but the power of new birth. To all who live by this principle, to the true Israel of God, may there be peace and mercy!

* According to centuries-old Eastern usage, this could easily mean, "Note how heavily I have pressed upon the pen in writing this." Thus it could be translated, "Notice how heavily I underline these words to you."

Let no one interfere with me after this. I carry on my scarred body the marks of Jesus.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, my brothers, be with your spirit.

THE FIRST LETTER TO THE CHRISTIANS AT CORINTH

Paul, commissioned by the will of God as a messenger of Christ Jesus, and Sosthenes, a Christian brother, to the church of God at Corinth—to those whom Christ Jesus has made holy, who are called to be God's men and women, to all true believers in Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours—grace and peace be to you from God the Father and the Lord, Jesus Christ!



- I. 19 *The cross shows that God's wisdom is not man's wisdom by any means*

It is written:

I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
And the prudence of the prudent will I reject.

For consider, what have the philosopher, the writer, and the critic of this world to show for all their wisdom? Has not God made the wisdom of this world look foolish? For it was after the world in its wisdom had failed to know God, that he in his wisdom chose to save all who would believe by the "simplemindedness" of the gospel message. For the Jews ask for miraculous proofs and the Greeks an intellectual panacea, but all we preach is Christ crucified—a stumbling block to the Jews and sheer nonsense to the gentiles, but for those who are called, whether Jews or Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. And this is really only natural, for God's "foolishness" is wiser than men, and his "weakness" is stronger than men.

1. 26 *Nor are God's values the same as man's*

For look at your own calling as Christians, my brothers. You don't see among you many of the wise (according to this world's judgment) nor many of the ruling class, nor many from the noblest families. But God has chosen what the world calls foolish to shame the wise; he has chosen what the world calls weak to shame the strong. He has chosen things of little strength and small repute, yes and even things which have no real existence to explode the pretensions of the things that are—that no man may boast in the presence of God. Yet from this same God you have received your standing in Jesus Christ, and he has become for us the true wisdom, a matter, in practice, of being made righteous and holy, in fact, of being redeemed. And this makes us see the truth of the scripture:

He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

11. 23 *To partake of the Lord's supper is a supremely serious thing*

The teaching I gave you was given me personally by the Lord himself, and it was this: the Lord Jesus, in the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and said, "Take, eat, this is my body which is being broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me." Similarly, when supper was ended, he took the cup saying, "This cup is the new agreement in my blood: do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

This can only mean that whenever you eat this bread or drink of this cup, you are proclaiming that the Lord has died for you, and you will do that until he comes again. So that, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord without proper reverence is sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.

No, a man should thoroughly examine himself, and only then should he eat the bread or drink of the cup. He that eats and drinks carelessly is eating and drinking a judgment on himself, for he is blind to the presence of the Lord's body.

12. 1 *The Holy Spirit inspires men's faith and imparts spiritual gifts*

Now I want to give you some further information in some spiritual matters. You have not forgotten that you were gentiles, follow-

ing dumb idols just as your impulses led you. Now I want you to understand, as Christians, that no one speaking by the Spirit of God could call Jesus accursed, and no one could say that he is the Lord, except by the Holy Spirit.

Men have different gifts, but it is the same Spirit who gives them. There are different ways of serving God, but it is the same Lord who is served. God works through different men in different ways, but it is the same God who achieves his purposes through them all. Each man is given his gift by the Spirit that he may use it for the common good.

One man's gift by the Spirit is to speak with wisdom, another's to speak with knowledge. The same Spirit gives to another man faith, to another the ability to heal, to another the power to do great deeds. The same Spirit gives to another man the gift of preaching the word of God, to another the ability to discriminate in spiritual matters, to another speech in different tongues and to yet another the power to interpret the tongues. Behind all these gifts is the operation of the same Spirit, who distributes to each individual man, as he wills.

12. 12 *The human body is an example of an organic unity*

As the human body, which has many parts, is a unity, and those parts, despite their multiplicity, constitute one single body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by the Spirit into one body, whether we were Jews, Greeks, slaves, or free men, and we have all had experience of the same Spirit.

Now the body is not one member but many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand I don't belong to the body," does that alter the fact that the foot *is* a part of the body? Or if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye I don't belong to the body," does that mean that the ear really is not part of the body? After all, if the body were all one eye, for example, where would be the sense of hearing? Or if it were all one ear, where would be the sense of smell? But God has arranged all the parts in the one body, according to his design. For if everything were concentrated in one part, how could there be a body at all? The fact is there are many parts, but only one body. So that the eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" nor again, can the head say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body which have no obvious function are the more essential to health; and to those parts of the body which seem to us to be less deserving of notice we have to allow the highest honor of function. The parts which do not look beautiful have a deeper beauty in the work they do, while the parts which look beautiful may not be at all essential to life! But God has harmonized the whole body by giving importance of

function to the parts which lack apparent importance, that the body should work together as a whole with all the members in sympathetic relationship with one another. So it happens that if one member suffers all the other members suffer with it, and if one member is honored all the members share a common joy.

Now you are together the body of Christ, and individually you are members of him. And in his church God has appointed first some to be his messengers; secondly, some to be preachers of power; thirdly, teachers. After them he has appointed workers of spiritual power, men with the gift of healing, helpers, organizers, and those with the gift of speaking in "tongues."

As we look at the body of Christ do we find all are his messengers, all are preachers, or all teachers? Do we find all wielders of spiritual power, all able to heal, all able to speak with tongues, or all able to interpret the tongues? No, we find God's distribution of gifts is on the same principles of harmony that he has shown in the human body.

You should set your hearts on the best spiritual gifts, but I shall show you a way which surpasses them all.

13. 1 *Christian love—the highest and best gift*

If I speak with the eloquence of men and of angels, but have no love, I become no more than blaring brass or crashing cymbal. If I have the gift of foretelling the future and hold in my mind not only all human knowledge but the very secrets of God, and if I also have that absolute faith which can move mountains, but have no love, I amount to nothing at all. If I dispose of all that I possess, yes, even if I give my own body to be burned, but have no love, I achieve precisely nothing.

This love of which I speak is slow to lose patience—it looks for a way of being constructive. It is not possessive: neither is it anxious to impress nor does it cherish inflated ideas of its own importance.

Love has good manners and does not pursue selfish advantage. It is not touchy. It does not keep account of evil or gloat over the wickedness of other people. On the contrary, it is glad with all good men when truth prevails.

Love knows no limit to its endurance, no end to its trust, no fading of its hope; it can outlast anything. It is, in fact, the one thing that still stands when all else has fallen.

13. 9 *All gifts except love will be superseded one day*

For if there are prophecies they will be fulfilled and done with, if there are "tongues" the need for them will disappear, if there is knowledge it will be swallowed up in truth. For our knowledge is

always incomplete and our prophecy is always incomplete, and when the complete comes, that is the end of the incomplete.

When I was a little child I talked and felt and thought like a little child. Now that I am a man my childish speech and feeling and thought have no further significance for me.

At present we are men looking at puzzling reflections in a mirror. The time will come when we shall see reality whole and face to face! At present all I know is a little fraction of the truth, but the time will come when I shall know it as fully as God now knows me!

In this life we have three great lasting qualities—faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of them is love.



THE SECOND LETTER TO THE CHRISTIANS AT CORINTH

This letter comes to you from Paul, God's messenger for Christ Jesus by the will of God, and from brother Timothy, and is addressed to the church of God in Corinth and all Christians throughout Achaia.

May grace and peace come to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. 3 *God's encouragements are adequate for all life's troubles*

Thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he is our Father and the source of all mercy and comfort. For he gives us comfort in our trials so that we in turn may be able to give the same sort of strong sympathy to others in theirs. Indeed, experience shows that the more we share Christ's suffering, the more we are able to give of his encouragement. This means that if we experience trouble we can pass on to you comfort and spiritual help; for if we ourselves have been comforted we know how to encourage you to endure patiently the same sort of troubles that we have ourselves endured. We are quite confident that if you have

to suffer troubles as we have done, then, like us, you will find the comfort and encouragement of God.

1. 8 *Man's extremity is God's opportunity*

We should like you, our brothers, to know something of what we went through in Asia. At that time we were completely overwhelmed; the burden was more than we could bear; in fact we told ourselves that this was the end. Yet we believe now that we have had this experience of coming to the end of our tether that we might learn to trust, not in ourselves, but in God who can raise the dead. It was God who preserved us from imminent death, and it is he who still preserves us. Further, we trust him to keep us safe in the future, and here you can join in and help by praying for us, so that the good that is done to us in answer to many prayers will mean eventually that many will thank God for our preservation.



4. 1 *Ours is a straightforward ministry bringing light into darkness*

This is the ministry which God in his mercy has given us, and nothing can daunt us. We use no hocus-pocus, no clever tricks, no dishonest manipulation of the Word of God. We speak the plain truth and so commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. If our gospel is "veiled," the veil must be in the minds of those who are spiritually dying. The spirit of this world has blinded the minds of those who do not believe, and prevents the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, the image of God, from shining on them. For it is Christ Jesus as Lord whom we preach, not ourselves; we are your servants for Jesus' sake. God, who first ordered light to shine in darkness, has flooded our hearts with his light. We now can enlighten men only because we can give them knowledge of the glory of God, as we see it in the face of Jesus Christ.

4. 7 *We experience death—we give life, by the power of God*

This priceless treasure we hold, so to speak, in a common earthenware jar—to show that the splendid power of it belongs to God and not to us. We are handicapped on all sides but we are never frustrated; we are puzzled, but never in despair. We are persecuted, but we never have to stand it alone: we may be knocked down but we are never knocked out! Every day we experience something of the death of Jesus, so that we may also know the

power of the life of Jesus in these bodies of ours. Yes, we who are living are always being exposed to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be plainly seen in our mortal lives. We are always facing death, but this means that you know more and more of life. Our faith is like that mentioned in the scripture:

I believed and therefore did I speak.

For we too speak because we believe, and we know for certain that he who raised the Lord Jesus from death shall also raise us with Jesus. We shall all stand together before him.

4. 15 *We live a transitory life with our eyes on the life eternal*

We wish you could see how all this is working out for your benefit, and how the more grace God gives, the more thanksgiving will redound to his glory. This is the reason that we never collapse. The outward man does indeed suffer wear and tear, but every day the inward man receives fresh strength. These little troubles (which are really so transitory) are winning for us a permanent, glorious, and solid reward out of all proportion to our pain. For we are looking all the time not at the visible things but at the invisible. The visible things are transitory: it is the invisible things that are really permanent.

We know, for instance, that if our earthly dwelling were taken down, like a tent, we have a permanent house in Heaven, made, not by man, but by God. In this present frame we sigh with deep longing for the heavenly house, for we do not want to face utter nakedness when death destroys our present dwelling—these bodies of ours. As long as we are clothed in this temporary dwelling we have a painful longing, not because we want just to get rid of these “clothes” but because we want to know the full cover of the permanent house that will be ours. We want our transitory life to be absorbed into the life that is eternal.

5. 5 *Death can have no terrors, for it means being with God*

Now the power that has planned this experience for us is God, and he has given us his Spirit as a guarantee of its truth. This makes us confident, whatever happens. We realize that being “at home” in the body means that to some extent we are “away” from the Lord, for we have to live by trusting him without seeing him. We are so sure of this that we would really rather be “away” from the body and be “at home” with the Lord.

It is our aim, therefore, to please him, whether we are “at home” or “away.” For every one of us will have to stand without pretense

before Christ our judge, and we shall be rewarded for what we did when we lived in our bodies, whether it was good or bad.



11. 1 *Why do you so readily accept the false and reject the true?*

I wish you could put up with a little of my foolishness—please try! My jealousy over you is the right sort of jealousy, for in my eyes you are like a fresh, unspoiled girl whom I am presenting as fiancée to your true husband, Christ himself. I am afraid that your minds may be seduced from a singlehearted devotion to him by the same subtle means that the serpent used toward Eve. For apparently you cheerfully accept a man who comes to you preaching a different Jesus from the one we told you about, and you readily receive a spirit and a gospel quite different from the ones you originally accepted. Yet I cannot believe I am in the least inferior to these extraspecial messengers of yours. Perhaps I am not a polished speaker, but I do know what I am talking about, and both what I am and what I say is pretty familiar to you. Perhaps I made a mistake in cheapening myself (though I did it to help you) by preaching the gospel without a fee. As a matter of fact I was only able to do this by “robbing” other churches, for it was what they paid me that made it possible to minister to you free of charge. Even when I was with you and very hard up, I did not bother any of you. It was the brothers who came from Macedonia who brought me all that I needed. Yes, I kept myself from being a burden to you then, and so I intend to do in the future. By the truth of Christ within me, no one shall stop my being proud of this independence through all Achaia!

Does this mean that I do not love you? God knows it doesn't, but I am determined to maintain this boast, so as to cut the ground from under the feet of those who profess to be God's messengers on the same terms as I am. *God's* messengers? They are counterfeits of the real thing, dishonest practitioners, “God's messengers” only by their own appointment. Nor do their tactics surprise me when I consider how Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is only to be expected that his agents shall have the appearance of ministers of righteousness—but they will get their deserts one day.

11. 16 *If you like self-commendations, listen to mine!*

Once more, let me advise you not to look upon me as a fool. Yet if you do, then listen to what this “fool” has to boast about.

I am not now speaking as the Lord commands me but as a fool who must be "in on" this business of boasting. Since all the others are so proud of themselves, let me do a little boasting as well. From your heights of superior wisdom I am sure you can smile tolerantly on a fool. Oh, you're tolerant, all right! You don't mind, do you, if a man takes away your liberty, spends your money, takes advantage of you, puts on airs or even smacks your face? I am almost ashamed to say that I never did brave, strong things like that to you. Yet in whatever particular they enjoy such confidence I (speaking as a fool, remember) have just as much confidence.

Are they Hebrews? So am I.

Are they Israelites? So am I.

Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I.

Are they ministers of Christ? I have more claim to this title than they. This is a silly game but look at this list:

I have worked harder than any of them.

I have served more prison sentences!

I have been beaten times without number.

I have faced death again and again.

I have been beaten the regulation thirty-nine stripes by the Jews five times.

I have been beaten with rods three times.

I have been stoned once.

I have been shipwrecked three times.

I have been twenty-four hours in the open sea.

In my travels I have been in constant danger from rivers and floods, from bandits, from my own countrymen, and from pagans. I have faced danger in city streets, danger in the desert, danger on the high seas, danger among false Christians. I have known exhaustion, pain, long vigils, hunger and thirst, doing without meals, cold and lack of clothing.

Apart from all external trials I have the daily burden of responsibility for all the churches. Do you think anyone is weak without my feeling this weakness? Does anyone have his faith upset without my longing to restore him?

Oh, if I am going to boast, let me boast of the things which have shown up my weakness! The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, he who is blessed for ever, knows that I speak the simple truth.

In Damascus, the town governor, acting by king Aretas' order, had men out to arrest me. I escaped by climbing through a window and being let down the wall in a basket. That's the sort of dignified exit I can boast about.

12. *I I have real grounds for "boasting," but I shall only hint at them*

No, I don't think it's really a good thing for me to boast at all, but I shall just mention visions and revelations of the Lord himself. I know a man in Christ who, fourteen years ago, had the experience of being caught up into the third Heaven. I don't know whether it was an actual physical experience; only God knows that. All I know is that this man was caught up into paradise. (I repeat, I do not know whether this was a physical happening or not; God alone knows.) This man heard words that cannot, and indeed must not, be translated into human speech. I am honestly proud of an experience like that, but I have made up my mind not to boast of anything personal, except of what may be called my weaknesses. If I should want to boast I should certainly be no fool to be proud of my experiences, and I should be speaking nothing but the sober truth. Yet I am not going to do so, for I don't want anyone to think more highly of me than his experience of me and what he hears of me should warrant. So tremendous, however, were the revelations that God gave me that, in order to prevent my becoming absurdly conceited, I was given a physical handicap—one of Satan's angels—to harass me and effectually stop any conceit. Three times I begged the Lord for it to leave me, but his reply has been, "My grace is enough for you: for where there is weakness, my power is shown the more completely."

Chapter 6



THE LETTERS OF PAUL'S MATURITY

While he was still in Macedonia, Paul had planned to go to Rome and even to Spain (Acts 19:21, Romans 1:11; 15:23). Obligated to postpone his visit to the Roman members of the church, he decided to write them a letter.

THE LETTER TO THE ROMANS (A.D. 56)

The Roman Christians were already famous "in the entire world" (Romans 1:8), but Paul feared that their faith, like that of the Galatians and Corinthians, had been undermined by the Jewish-Christian party. Unlike the preceding letters, the epistle to the Romans was not dictated by the conflicts of the moment. This explains the width of its outlook, the harmony of its structure, and the serenity of its tone.

The first part of the letter (1:1—8:39) presents the principle of justification by faith (1:16—17; see Galatians 3:11), which even then was widely misunderstood. The idea of "justification" is derived from the ancient Hebrew idea of religion understood as a covenant sworn between God and man (see Introduction). To be in a right relation with God was the first goal of Israel's life. Sin is not just a crime or an act of revolt; it is the breaking of the wonderful rapport of love which unites man to God. Sin is estrangement from the life of the Lord. When Christians unite with God through participation in the death and the rebirth of Jesus Christ, they receive the grace to die in their old selves and to be reborn as

new creatures. Faith is the appropriation of the grace of God offered in the cross of Christ. It represents not just an intellectual belief, but a shattering acceptance in oneself of the life and death of Jesus. The renewal of the rapport of love between God and man is called in Paul's language "justification by faith."

The second part of the letter (9:1—11:36) considers the Christian principle of faith in the realm of world history. Israel is the chosen people of God, and Paul expresses the certainty that his kinsman, the Jews, will be saved with the followers of the gospel.

The third part of the letter (12:1—15:33) is an exhortation to practice brotherly love and to accept the authority of the Roman government. By accident of manuscript transmission, the fragment of a now lost letter to the Ephesians has become attached to the letter to the Romans (16:1—27).

Paul's letter to the Romans has played the most important part in the development of Christian thought throughout the ages, from Augustine and the Reformers to modern theologians.

THE CAPACITY OF PAUL (A.D. 56—64?)

The indefatigable apostle was to fulfil his dream of going to Rome, but as a captive in irons. Ignoring the repeated warnings of his friends, he returned to Jerusalem in the spring of A.D. 56 in order to deliver to the poor of the mother church the offerings he had collected for them in Greece and Asia Minor.

The priests of the Jerusalem Temple plotted Paul's murder but they succeeded only in having him arrested by the military police (Acts 20:1—23:35). Transferred to a Roman jail in Caesarea, the seat of the governor of the province, he awaited trial for two years, and succeeded in pleading for the truth of the gospel before King Agrippa II, a great-grandson of Herod the Great (Acts 25:1—26:32).

As there was no prospect of a judiciary release, Paul, as a Roman citizen, appealed to the emperor. After a dangerous voyage, during which the ship on which he was prisoner was wrecked, off the rocks of Malta, he reached the capital of the empire (Acts 27:1—28:30). There he remained in enforced residence for two years (A.D. 60—62). It was presumably during that period that he wrote to the Philippians, sent a note to Philemon, and dictated a circular letter to the Laodiceans. He may have perished during

Nero's persecution (A.D. 64), although it is not impossible that he survived the crisis and lived to an advanced age. Historical documentation on his death is lacking.

THE LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS (A.D. 62?)

The Christians of Philippi, in Macedonia, were the first Europeans who had been won to the gospel. Paul's relation with them was always close and even affectionate. When they heard that he was in prison, they sent him several gifts (Philippians 4:16; see II Corinthians 11:9), and they even dispatched one of their numbers, Epaphroditus, to take care of him. According to Polycarp, a second-century bishop of Smyrna, Paul wrote to the Philippians several times. Many scholars believe that the only preserved letter of Paul to the Philippians is an expanded edition of several independent notes. There is an abrupt change of style (3:2), and the adverb "finally" comes twice before the end of the letter (3:1 and 4:8). In any case, the writing shows a mature man, joyful in the face of adversity.

It is in this letter that Paul has preserved a hymn on the divine existence of Christ before his incarnation (Philippians 2:6-11). This passage reveals the growth of Christian thinking on the mystery of the historical figure of Jesus. Such poetic imagery played a part in the writing of traditions concerning the birth of Jesus (see the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Luke), and later influenced the Christian poem on the eternal Word made flesh (John 1:1-18).

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO PHILEMON (A.D. 62-64)

Onesimus, a runaway slave of Philemon, was converted by Paul to the Christian faith. The apostle sent him back to his master, interceding on his behalf with a penned note which reveals a depth of friendship as well as remarkable lucidity in the problems of human relations. It has been said that Paul gave by this letter an unfortunate sanction to slavery. One should not forget that he was not proposing a social program for a new society on earth. He was waiting for the end of the world at any moment, and for him a Christian master and a Christian slave were equal.

THE LETTERS TO THE COLOSSIANS AND TO THE "EPHESIANS" (A.D. 62-64)

With his friend Tychicus, who accompanied Onesimus back to Asia Minor, Paul also sent a letter to the church which met at Philemon's house in Colossae, and another letter, probably to the nearby community of Laodicea. When the manuscripts of Paul's letters were copied and collected, the letter to the Laodiceans was thought to have been written to the Ephesians. Many ideas of the letters to the Colossians and to the Laodiceans are similar.

In the years of his captivity, Paul continued to reflect on the meaning of the person of Christ (Colossians 1:15-20) as well as on that of the universal church, which he called the mystical body of Christ (Ephesians 5:25-33).

THE LETTER TO THE CHRISTIANS AT ROME

This letter comes to you from Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called as a messenger and appointed for the service of that gospel of God which was long ago promised by the prophets in the holy scriptures.

The gospel is centered in God's Son, a descendant of David by human genealogy and patently marked out as the Son of God by the power of that Spirit of holiness which raised him to life again from the dead. He is our Lord, Jesus Christ, from whom we received grace and our commission in his name to forward obedience to the faith in all nations. And of this great number you at Rome are also called to belong to him.

To you all then, loved of God and called to be Christ's men and women, grace and peace from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. 8 *A personal message*

I must begin by telling you how I thank God through Jesus Christ for you all, since the news of your faith has become known everywhere. Before God, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, I assure you that you are always in my prayers. I am constantly asking him that he will somehow make it possible for me now, at long last, to come to Rome. I am longing to see you: I want to bring you some spiritual strength, and that will mean that I shall be strengthened by you, each of us helped by the other's faith.

Then I should like you to know, my brothers, that I have long intended to come to you (but something has always prevented me), for I should like to see some results among you, as I have among other gentiles. I feel myself under a sort of universal obligation, I owe something to all men, from cultured Greek to ignorant savage. That is why I want, as far as my ability will carry me, to preach the gospel to you who live in Rome as well. For I am not ashamed of the gospel. I see it as the very power of God working for the salvation of everyone who believes it, both Jew and Greek. I see in it God's plan for imparting righteousness to men, a process begun and continued by their faith. For, as the scripture says:

The righteous shall live by faith.



8. 1 *The way out—new life in Christ*

No condemnation now hangs over the head of those who are "in" Christ Jesus. For the new spiritual principle of life "in" Christ Jesus lifts me out of the old vicious circle of sin and death.

The Law never succeeded in producing righteousness—the failure was always the weakness of human nature. But God has met this by sending his own Son Jesus Christ to live in that human nature which causes the trouble. And, *while Christ was actually taking upon himself the sins of men, God condemned that sinful nature*. So that we are able to meet the Law's requirements, so long as we are living no longer by the dictates of our sinful nature, but in obedience to the promptings of the Spirit. The carnal attitude sees no further than natural things. But the spiritual attitude reaches out after the things of the Spirit. The former attitude means, bluntly, death: the latter means life and inward peace. And this is only to be expected, for the carnal attitude is inevitably opposed to the purpose of God, and neither can nor will follow his

laws for living. Men who hold this attitude cannot possibly please God.

8. 9 *What the presence of Christ within means*

But you are not carnal but spiritual if the Spirit of God finds a home within you. You cannot, indeed, be a Christian at all unless you have something of his Spirit in you. Now if Christ does live within you his presence means that your sinful nature is dead, but your spirit becomes alive because of the righteousness he brings with him. I said that our nature is "dead" in the presence of Christ, and so it is, because of its sin. Nevertheless once the Spirit of him who raised Christ Jesus from the dead lives within you he will, by the same Spirit, bring to your whole being new strength and vitality.

So then, my brothers, you can see that we have no particular reason to feel grateful to our sensual nature, or to live life on the level of the instincts. Indeed that way of living leads to certain spiritual death. But if on the other hand you cut the nerve of your instinctive actions by obeying the Spirit, you are on the way to real living.

8. 14 *Christ is within—follow the lead of his Spirit*

All who follow the leading of God's Spirit are God's own sons. Nor are you meant to relapse into the old slavish attitude of fear—you have been adopted into the very family circle of God and you can say with a full heart, "Father, my Father." The Spirit himself endorses our inward conviction that we really are the children of God. Think what that means. If we are his children we share his treasures, and all that Christ claims as his will belong to all of us as well! Yes, if we share in his sufferings we shall certainly share in his glory.

8. 18 *Present distress is temporary and negligible*

In my opinion whatever we may have to go through now is less than nothing compared with the magnificent future God has planned for us. The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own. The world of creation cannot as yet see reality, not because it chooses to be blind, but because in God's purpose it has been so limited—yet it has been given hope. And the hope is that in the end the whole of created life will be rescued from the tyranny of change and decay, and have its share in that magnificent liberty which can only belong to the children of God!

It is plain to anyone with eyes to see that at the present time all created life groans in a sort of universal travail. And it is plain,

too, that we who have a foretaste of the Spirit are in a state of painful tension, while we wait for that redemption of our bodies which will mean that at last we have realized our full sonship in him. We were saved by this hope, but in our moments of impatience let us remember that hope always means waiting for something that we do not yet possess. But if we hope for something we cannot see, then we must settle down to wait for it in patience.

8. 26 *This is not mere theory—the Spirit helps us to find it true*

The Spirit of God not only maintains this hope within us, but helps us in our present limitations. For example, we do not know how to pray worthily as sons of God, but his Spirit within us is actually praying for us in those agonizing longings which never find words. And God who knows the heart's secrets understands, of course, the Spirit's intention as he prays for those who love God.

Moreover we know that to those who love God, who are called according to his plan, everything that happens fits into a pattern for good. God, in his foreknowledge, chose them to bear the family likeness of his Son, that he might be the eldest of a family of many brothers. He chose them long ago; when the time came he called them, he made them righteous in his sight and then lifted them to the splendor of life as his own sons.

8. 31 *We hold, in Christ, an impregnable position*

In face of all this, what is there left to say? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not grudge his own Son but gave him up for us all—can we not trust such a God to give us, with him, everything else that we can need?

Who would dare to accuse us, whom God has chosen? The judge himself has declared us free from sin. Who is in a position to condemn? Only Christ, and Christ died for us, Christ rose for us, Christ reigns in power for us, Christ prays for us!

Who can separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble, pain, or persecution? Can lack of clothes and food, danger to life and limb, the threat of force of arms? Indeed some of us know the truth of that ancient text:

For thy sake we are killed all the day long;
We were accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

No, in all these things we win an overwhelming victory through him who has proved his love for us.

I have become absolutely convinced that neither death nor life, neither messenger of Heaven nor monarch of earth, neither what happens today nor what may happen tomorrow, neither a power

from on high nor a power from below, nor anything else in God's whole world has any power to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord!

9. *I The fly in the ointment—the infidelity of my own race*

Before Christ and my own conscience in the Holy Spirit I assure you that I am speaking the plain truth when I say that there is something that makes me feel very depressed, like a pain that never leaves me. It is the condition of my brothers and fellow Israelites, and I have actually reached the pitch of wishing myself cut off from Christ if it meant that they could be won for God.

Just think what the Israelities have had given to them. The privilege of being adopted as sons of God, the experience of seeing something of the glory of God, the receiving of the agreements made with God, the gift of the Law, true ways of worship, God's own promises—all these are theirs. The patriarchs are theirs, and so too, as far as human descent goes, is Christ himself, Christ who is God over all, blessed for ever.



12. *I We have seen God's mercy and wisdom: how shall we respond?*

With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give him your bodies, as a living sacrifice consecrated to him and acceptable by him. Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God remold your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves toward the goal of true maturity.

As your spiritual teacher I give this piece of advice to each one of you. Don't cherish exaggerated ideas of yourself or your importance, but try to have a sane estimate of your capabilities by the light of the faith that God has given to you all. For just as you have many members in one physical body and those members differ in their functions, so we, though many in number, compose one body in Christ and are all members of one another. Through the grace of God we have different gifts. If our gift is preaching, let us preach to the limit of our vision. If it is serving others let us concentrate on our service; if it is teaching let us give all we have to our teaching; and if our gift be the stimulating of the faith of others let us set ourselves to it. Let the man who is called to give, give freely; let the man who wields authority think of his responsibility; and let the man who feels sympathy for his fellows act cheerfully.

12. 9 *Let us have real Christian behavior*

Let us have no imitation Christian love. Let us have a genuine break with evil and a real devotion to good. Let us have real warm affection for one another as between brothers, and a willingness to let the other man have the credit. Let us not allow slackness to spoil our work and let us keep the fires of the spirit burning, as we do our work for the Lord. Base your happiness on your hope in Christ. When trials come endure them patiently; steadfastly maintain the habit of prayer. Give freely to fellow Christians in want, never grudging a meal or a bed to those who need them. And as for those who try to make your life a misery, bless them. Don't curse, bless. Share the happiness of those who are happy, and the sorrow of those who are sad. Live in harmony with one another. Don't become snobbish but take a real interest in ordinary people. Don't become set in your own opinions. Don't pay back a bad turn by a bad turn, to *anyone*. See that your public behavior is above criticism. As far as your responsibility goes, live at peace with everyone. Never take vengeance into your own hands, my dear friends: stand back and let God punish if he will. For it is written:

Vengeance belongeth unto me: I will recompense.

And these are God's words:

If thine enemy hunger, feed him;

If he thirst, give him to drink:

For in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head.

Don't allow yourself to be overpowered by evil. Take the offensive—overpower evil with good!



THE LETTER TO THE CHRISTIANS AT PHILIPPI

Paul and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ, to the bishops, deacons, and all true Christians at Philippi, grace and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ the Lord!

1. 3 *I have the most pleasant memories of you all*

I thank my God for you Christians at Philippi whenever I think of you. My constant prayers for you are a real joy, for they bring back to my mind how we have worked together for the gospel from the earliest days until now. I feel sure that the one who has begun his good work in you will go on developing it until the day of Jesus Christ.

It is only natural that I should feel like this about you all—you are very dear to me. For during the time I was in prison as well as when I was out defending and demonstrating the power of the gospel we shared together the grace of God. God knows how much I long, with the deepest Christian love and affection, for your companionship. My prayer for you is that you may have still more love—a love that is full of knowledge and wise insight. I want you to be able always to recognize the highest and the best, and to live sincere and blameless lives until the day of Christ. I want to see your lives full of true goodness, produced by the power that Jesus Christ gives you to the praise and glory of God.

1. 12 *My imprisonment has turned out to be no bad thing*

Now, concerning myself, I want you to know, my brothers, that what has happened to me has, in effect, turned out to the advantage of the gospel. For, first of all, my imprisonment means a personal witness for Christ before the palace guards, not to mention others who come and go. Then, it means that most of our brothers, somehow taking fresh heart in the Lord from the very fact that I am a prisoner for Christ's sake, have shown far more courage in boldly proclaiming the Word of God. I know that some are preaching Christ out of jealousy, in order to annoy me, but some are preaching him in good faith. These latter are preaching out of their love for me. For they know that God has set me here in prison to defend our right to preach the gospel. The motive of the former is questionable—they preach in a partisan spirit, hoping to make my chains even more galling than they would otherwise be. But what does it matter? However they may look at it, the fact remains that Christ *is* being preached, whether sincerely or not, and that fact makes me very happy. Yes, and I shall go on being very happy, for I know that what is happening will be for the good of my own soul, thanks to your prayers and the resources of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. It all accords with my own earnest wishes and hopes, which are that I should never be in any way ashamed, but that now, as always, I should honor Christ with the utmost boldness by the way I live, whether that means I am to

face death or to go on living. For living to me means simply "Christ," and if I die I should merely gain more of him.



2. 1 *Above all things be loving, humble, united*

Now if your experience of Christ's encouragement and love means anything to you, if you have known something of the fellowship of his Spirit, and all that it means in kindness and deep sympathy, do make my best hopes for you come true! Live together in harmony, live together in love, as though you had only one mind and one spirit between you. Never act from motives of rivalry or personal vanity, but in humility think more of one another than you do of yourselves. None of you should think only of his own affairs, but each should learn to see things from other people's point of view.

2. 5 *Let Christ be your example of humility*

Let Christ Jesus be your example as to what your attitude should be. For he, who had always been God by nature, did not cling to his prerogatives as God's equal, but stripped himself of all privilege by consenting to be a slave by nature and being born as mortal man. And, having become man, he humbled himself by living a life of utter obedience, even to the extent of dying, *and the death he died was the death of a common criminal*. That is why God has now lifted him so high, and has given him the name beyond all names, so that at the name of Jesus "every knee shall bow," whether in Heaven or earth or under the earth. And that is why, in the end, "every tongue shall confess" that Jesus Christ is the Lord, to the glory of God the Father.



THE LETTER TO PHILEMON

Paul, a prisoner for the sake of Jesus Christ, and brother Timothy to Philemon our much-loved fellow worker, Apphia our sister, and Archippus who is with us in the fight; to the church that meets in your house—grace and peace be to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

A personal appeal

I always thank God for you, Philemon, in my constant prayers for you all, for I have heard how you love and trust both the Lord Jesus himself and those who believe in him. And I pray that those who share your faith may also share your knowledge of all the good things that believing in Christ Jesus can mean to us. It is your love, my brother, that gives us such comfort and happiness, for it cheers the hearts of your fellow Christians. And although I could rely on my authority in Christ and dare to *order* you to do what I consider right, I am not doing that. No, I am appealing to that love of yours, a simple personal appeal from Paul the old man, in prison for Jesus Christ's sake. I am appealing for my child. Yes, I have become a father though I have been under lock and key, and the child's name is—Onesimus! Oh, I know you have found him pretty useless in the past but he is going to be useful now, to both of us. I am sending him back to you: *will you receive him as my son, part of me?* I should have dearly loved to have kept him with me: he could have done what you would have done—looked after me here in prison for the gospel's sake. But I would do nothing without consulting you first, for if you have a favor to give me, let it be spontaneous and not forced from you by circumstances!

It occurs to me that there has been a purpose in your losing him. You lost him, a slave, for a time; now you are having him back for good, not merely as a slave, but as a brother Christian. He is already especially loved by me—how much more will you be able to love him, both as a man and as a fellow Christian! You and I have so much in common, haven't we? Then do welcome him as you would welcome me. If you feel he has wronged or cheated

you put it down to my account. I've written this with my own hand: I, Paul, hereby promise to repay you. (Of course I'm not stressing the fact that you might be said to owe me your very soul!) Now do grant me this favor, my brother—such an act of love will do my old heart good. As I send you this letter I know you'll do what I ask—I believe, in fact, you'll do more.

Will you do something else? Get the guest room ready for *me*, for I have great hopes that through your prayers I myself will be returned to you as well!

Epaphras, here in prison with me, sends his greetings: so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, all fellow workers for God. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, amen.

THE LETTER TO THE CHRISTIANS AT COLOSSAE

Paul, a messenger of Christ Jesus by God's will, and our brother Timothy send this greeting to all faithful Christians at Colossae: grace and peace be to you from God our Father!

I. 3 *We thank God for you and pray constantly for you*

I want you to know by this letter that we here are constantly praying for you, and whenever we do we thank God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ because you believe in Christ Jesus and because you are showing true Christian love toward other Christians. We know that you are showing these qualities because you have grasped the hope reserved for you in Heaven.



I. 15 *Who Christ is, and what he has done*

Now Christ is the visible expression of the invisible God. He existed before creation began, for it was through him that everything was made, whether spiritual or material, seen or unseen. Through him, and for him, also, were created power and dominion, ownership and authority. In fact, every single thing was created through, and for, him. He is both the first principle and the

upholding principle of the whole scheme of creation. And now he is the head of the body which is the church. Life from nothing began through him, and life from the dead began through him, and he is, therefore, justly called the Lord of all. It was in him that the full nature of God chose to live, and through him God planned to reconcile in his own person, as it were, everything on earth and everything in Heaven by virtue of the sacrifice of the cross.



THE LETTER TO THE CHRISTIANS AT EPHESUS (AND IN OTHER PLACES)

Paul, messenger of Christ Jesus by God's will, to all faithful Christians at Ephesus (and other places where this letter is read): grace and peace be to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. 3 *Praise God for what he has done for us Christians!*

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for giving us through Christ every possible spiritual benefit as citizens of Heaven! For consider what he has done—before the foundation of the world he chose us to become, in Christ, his holy and blameless children living within his constant care. He planned, in his purpose of love, that we should be adopted as his own children through Jesus Christ—that we might learn to praise that glorious generosity of his which has made us welcome in the everlasting love he bears toward the Beloved. It is through him, at the cost of his own blood, that we are redeemed, freely forgiven through that full and generous grace which has overflowed into our lives and opened our eyes to the truth. For God has allowed us to know the secret of his plan, and it is this: he purposes in his sovereign will that all human history shall be consummated in Christ, that everything that exists in Heaven or earth shall find its perfection and fulfillment in him.



3. 14 *I pray that you may know God's power in practice*

When I think of the greatness of this great plan I fall on my knees before the Father (from whom all fatherhood, earthly or heavenly, derives its name), and I pray that out of the glorious richness of his resources he will enable you to know the strength of the Spirit's inner reinforcement—that Christ may actually live in your hearts by your faith. And I pray that you, firmly fixed in love yourselves, may be able to grasp (with all Christians) how wide and deep and long and high is the love of Christ—and to know for yourselves that love so far beyond our comprehension. May you be filled through all your being with God himself!



4. 1 *Christians should be as one, as God is one*

As God's prisoner, then, I beg you to live lives worthy of your high calling. Accept life with humility and patience, making allowances for one another because you love one another. Make it your aim to be at one in the Spirit, and you will inevitably be at peace with one another. You all belong to one body, of which there is one Spirit, just as you all experienced one calling to one hope. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, one Father of us all, who is the one over all, the one working through all and the one living in all.

4. 7 *God's gifts vary, but it is the same God who gives*

Naturally there are different gifts and functions; individually grace is given to us in different ways out of the rich diversity of Christ's giving. As the scripture says:

When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive,
And gave gifts unto men.

(Note the implication here—to say that Christ “ascended” means that he must previously have “descended,” that is, from the height of Heaven to the depth of this world. The one who made this descent is identically the same person as he who has now ascended high above the very Heavens—that the whole universe from lowest to highest might know his presence.)

His “gifts unto men” were varied. Some he made his messengers, some prophets, some preachers of the gospel; to some he gave the power to guide and teach his people. His gifts were made that Christians might be properly equipped for their service, that the whole body might be built up until the time comes when, in the

unity of common faith and common knowledge of the Son of God, we arrive at real maturity—that measure of development which is meant by “the fullness of Christ.”

4. 14 *True maturity means growing up “into” Christ*

We are not meant to remain as children at the mercy of every chance wind of teaching and the jockeying of men who are expert in the crafty presentation of lies. But we are meant to hold firmly to the truth in love, and to grow up in every way into Christ, the head. For it is from the head that the whole body, as a harmonious structure knit together by the joints with which it is provided, grows by the proper functioning of individual parts to its full maturity in love.



5. 15 *You know the truth—let your life show it!*

Live life, then, with a due sense of responsibility, not as men who do not know the meaning and purpose of life but as *those who do*. Make the best use of your time, despite all the difficulties of these days. Don't be vague, but firmly grasp what you know to be the will of the Lord. Don't get your stimulus from wine (for there is always the danger of excessive drinking), but let the Spirit stimulate your souls. Express your joy in singing among yourselves psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, making music in your hearts for the ears of the Lord! Thank God at all times for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. And “fit in with” one another, because of your common reverence for Christ.

5. 22 *Christ and the church the pattern relationship for husband and wife*

You wives must learn to adapt yourselves to your husbands, as you submit yourselves to the Lord, for the husband is the “head” of the wife in the same way that Christ is head of the church and savior of his body. The willing subjection of the church to Christ should be reproduced in the submission of wives to their husbands. But, remember, this means that the husband must give his wife the same sort of love that Christ gave to the church, when he sacrificed himself for her. Christ gave himself to make her holy, having cleansed her through the baptism of his Word—to make her an altogether glorious church in his eyes. She is to be free from spots, wrinkles, or any other disfigurements—a church holy and perfect.

Men ought to give their wives the love they naturally have for their own bodies. The love a man gives his wife is the extending of

his love for himself to enfold her. Nobody ever hates or neglects his own body; he feeds it and looks after it. And that is what Christ does for his body, the church. And we are all members of that body.

For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother,
And shall cleave to his wife; and the twain shall become one
flesh.

The marriage relationship is doubtless a great mystery, but I am speaking of something deeper still—the marriage of Christ and his church.

In practice what I have said amounts to this: let every one of you who is a husband love his wife as he loves himself, and let the wife reverence her husband.



6. 10 *Be forewarned and forearmed in your spiritual conflict*

In conclusion, be strong—not in yourselves but in the Lord, in the power of his boundless resource. Put on God's complete armor so that you can successfully resist all the devil's methods of attack. For our fight is not against any physical enemy: it is against organizations and powers that are spiritual. We are up against the unseen power that controls this dark world, and spiritual agents from the very headquarters of evil. Therefore you must wear the whole armor of God that you may be able to resist evil in its day of power, and that even when you have fought to a standstill you may still stand your ground. Take your stand then with truth as your belt, righteousness your breastplate, the gospel of peace firmly on your feet, salvation as your helmet, and in your hand the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. Above all be sure you take faith as your shield, for it can quench every burning missile the enemy hurls at you.



PART 3



*The Literature of the Church's
Coming of Age A.D. 85-150*

Chapter 7



THE LETTERS OF PAUL'S SUCCESSORS

Practically nothing is known with historical accuracy about the second generation of the church. During Nero's persecution (A.D. 64), Roman Christians were burnt alive or thrown to the wild beasts in the imperial gardens of the Vatican hill, and the apostle Peter was probably crucified upside down. A few months later, the Jews of Jerusalem once again revolted against Rome and, after a desperate struggle, Jerusalem itself was razed by the Roman general Titus (A.D. 70). Christians were no longer under the protection granted by the Roman government to the Jewish religion, and they suffered a number of persecutions, especially from Domitian in about A.D. 95 and from Trajan in about 110. The church was now spread in all the large centers of the empire, from Alexandria, Antioch, and Ephesus in the East, to Rome, Gaul, and Spain in the West.

THE LETTERS TO TIMOTHY AND TITUS

It was probably after the death of Paul, while the synoptic gospels and the book of Acts were being published, that his letters were collected, recopied, and circulated throughout the Christian communities of the empire. A number of short notes written by Paul himself to his disciples, Timothy and Titus, were preserved in longer letters which do not reflect the Pauline style and ideas. A tradition of "sound doctrine" was now the concern of the new generation. A hierarchy appeared in the government of the church

as "bishops" became the leaders beside and perhaps already above the "elders" or "presbyters" (I Timothy 5:17; 3:2; compare Philippians 1:1 and Acts 20:28). There was also the need to fight the influx of pagan superstitions.

THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS (A.D. 75-85)

This document interprets the Hebrew Bible in the light of the person, life, and death of Jesus. Many scholars have thought for centuries that it came from Paul, but there was always doubt, even as early as Tertullian in the third century A.D. The understanding of "faith" which appears in this writing differs from that of Paul, for it is no longer the quality of total communion with Christ but "the assurance of things hoped for" (Hebrews 11:1).

THE FIRST LETTER TO TIMOTHY

Paul, Jesus Christ's messenger by command of God and savior and Christ Jesus our hope, to Timothy my true son in the faith: grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

1. 3 *A reminder*

I am repeating in this letter the advice I gave you just before I went to Macedonia and urged you to stay at Ephesus. I wanted you to do this so that you could order certain persons to stop inventing new doctrines and to leave hoary old myths and interminable genealogies alone. Such things lead men to speculation rather than to ordered living which results from faith in God. The ultimate aim of the Christian ministry, after all, is to produce the love which springs from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a genuine faith. Some seem to have forgotten this and to have lost themselves in endless words. They want a reputation as teachers of the Law, yet

they fail to realize the meaning of their own words, still less of the subject they are so dogmatic about.



6. 11 *Maintain a fearless witness until the last day*

But you, the man of God, keep clear of such things. Set your heart not on riches, but on goodness, Christ-likeness, faith, love, patience, and humility. Fight the worthwhile battle of the faith, keep your grip on that life eternal to which you have been called, and to which you boldly professed your loyalty before many witnesses. I charge you in the sight of God who gives us life, and Jesus Christ who fearlessly witnessed to the truth before Pontius Pilate, to keep your commission clean and above reproach until the final coming of Christ. This will be, in his own time, the final dénouement of God, who is the blessed controller of all things, the king over all kings and the master of all masters, the only source of immortality, the one who lives in unapproachable light, the one whom no mortal eye has ever seen or ever can see. To him be acknowledged all honor and power for ever, amen!



THE SECOND LETTER TO TIMOTHY

Paul, messenger by God's appointment in the promised life of Christ Jesus, to Timothy, my own dearly loved son: grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God the Father and Christ Jesus, our Lord.

1. 3 *I thank God for your faith: guard it well*

I thank the God of my forefathers, whom I serve with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers. Every day and every night I have been longing to see you, for I can't forget how moved you were when I left you, and to have you with me again would be the greatest possible joy. I often think of that

genuine faith of yours—a faith that first appeared in your grandmother Lois, then in Eunice your mother, and is now, I am convinced, in you as well. Because of this faith, I now remind you to stir up that inner fire which God gave you at your ordination through my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power and love and a sound mind. So never be ashamed of bearing witness to our Lord, nor of me, his prisoner. Accept, as I do, all the hardship that faithfulness to the gospel entails in the strength that God gives you. For he has rescued us from all that is really evil and called us to a life of holiness—not because of any of our achievements but for his own purpose. Before time began he planned to give us in Christ Jesus the grace to achieve this purpose, but it is only since our savior Christ Jesus has been revealed that the method has become apparent. For Christ has completely abolished death, and has now, through the gospel, opened to us men the shining possibilities of the life that is eternal. It is this gospel that I am commissioned to proclaim; it is of this gospel that I am appointed both messenger and teacher, and it is for this gospel that I am now suffering these things. Yet I am not in the least ashamed. For I know the one in whom I have placed my confidence, and I am perfectly certain that the work he has committed to me is safe in his hands until that day.

So keep my words in your mind as the pattern of sound teaching, given to you in the faith and love of Christ Jesus. Take the greatest care of the good things which were entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who lives within us.



As for me, I feel that the last drops of my life are being poured out for God. The time for my departure has arrived. The glorious fight that God gave me I have fought, the course that I was set I have finished, and I have kept the faith. The future for me holds the crown of righteousness which God, the true judge, will give to me in that day—and not, of course, only to me but to all those who have loved what they have seen of him.

4. 9 *Personal messages*

Do your best to come to me as soon as you can. Demas, loving this present world, I fear, has left me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus is away in Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me now.

When you come, pick up Mark and bring him with you. I can certainly find a job for him here. (I had to send Tychicus off to Ephesus.) And please bring with you the cloak I left with Carpus

at Troas, and the books, especially the manuscripts. Alexander the coppersmith did me a great deal of harm—the Lord will reward him for what he did—and I should be very careful of him if I were you. He has been an obstinate opponent of our teaching.

The first time I had to defend myself no one was on my side—they all deserted me, God forgive them! Yet the Lord himself stood by me and gave me the strength to proclaim the message clearly and fully, so that the gentiles could hear it, and I was rescued “from the lion’s mouth.” I am sure the Lord will rescue me from every evil plot, and will keep me safe until I reach his heavenly kingdom. Glory be to him for ever and ever, amen!

4. 19 *Closing greetings*

Give my love to Prisca and Aquila and Onesiphorus and his family. Erastus is still staying on at Corinth, and Trophimus I had to leave sick at Miletus.

Do your best to get here before the winter. Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all here send their greetings to you. The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

THE LETTER TO JEWISH CHRISTIANS (THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS)

God, who gave to our forefathers many different glimpses of the truth in the words of the prophets, has now, at the end of the present age, given us the truth in the Son. Through the Son God made the whole universe, and to the Son he has ordained that all creation shall ultimately belong. This Son, radiance of the glory of God, flawless expression of the nature of God, himself the upholding principle of all that is, effected in person the reconciliation between God and man and then took his seat at the right hand of the majesty on high—thus proving himself, by the more glorious name that he has won, far greater than all the angels of God.



Now faith means putting our full confidence in the things we hope for; it means being certain of things we cannot see. It was

this kind of faith that won their reputation for the saints of old. And it is after all only by faith that our minds accept as fact that the whole scheme of time and space was created by God's command—that the world which we can see has come into being through principles which are invisible.

II. 4 *Faith is the distinctive mark of the saints of the old agreement*

ABLE. It was because of his faith that Abel made a better sacrifice to God than Cain, and he had evidence that God looked upon him as a righteous man, whose gifts he could accept. And though Cain killed him, yet by his faith he still speaks to us today.

ENOCH. It was because of his faith that Enoch was promoted to the eternal world without experiencing death. He disappeared from this world because God promoted him, and before that happened his reputation was that "he pleased God." And without faith it is impossible to please him. The man who approaches God must have faith in two things, first that God exists and secondly that it is worth a man's while to try to find God.

NOAH. It was through his faith that Noah, on receiving God's warning of impending disaster, reverently constructed an ark to save his household. This action of faith condemned the unbelief of the rest of the world, and won for Noah the righteousness before God which follows such a faith.

ABRAHAM. It was by faith that Abraham obeyed the summons to go out to a place which he would eventually possess, and he set out in complete ignorance of his destination. It was faith that kept him journeying like a foreigner through the land of promise, with no more home than the tents which he shared with Isaac and Jacob, co-heirs with him of the promise. For Abraham's eyes were looking forward to that city with solid foundations of which God himself is both architect and builder.

SARAH. It was by faith that even Sarah gained the physical vitality to become a mother despite her great age, and she gave birth to a child when far beyond the normal years of childbearing. She could do this because she believed that the one who had given the promise was utterly trustworthy. So it happened that from one man, who as a potential father was already considered dead, there arose a race "as numerous as the stars," as "countless as the sands of the seashore."

II. 13 *All the heroes of faith looked forward to their true country*

All these whom we have mentioned maintained their faith but died without actually receiving God's promises, though they had

seen them in the distance, had hailed them as true and were quite convinced of their reality. They freely admitted that they lived on this earth as exiles and foreigners. Men who say that mean, of course, that their eyes are fixed upon their true homeland. If they had meant the particular country they had left behind, they had ample opportunity to return. No, the fact is that they longed for a better country altogether, nothing less than a heavenly one. And because of this faith of theirs, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for in sober truth he has prepared for them a city.

II. 17 *Abraham's faith once more*

It was by faith that Abraham, when put to the test, offered Isaac for sacrifice. Yes, the man who had heard God's promises was prepared to offer up his only son of whom it had been said, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." He believed that God could raise his son up, even if he were dead. And he did, in a manner of speaking, receive him back from death.

II. 20 *The faith of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph*

It was by faith that Isaac gave Jacob and Esau his blessing, for his words dealt with what should happen in the future. It was by faith that the dying Jacob blessed each of Joseph's sons as he bowed in prayer over his staff. It was by faith that Joseph on his deathbed spoke of the exodus of the Israelites, and gave confident orders about the disposal of his own mortal remains.

II. 23 *Moses*

It was by faith that Moses was hidden by his parents for three months after his birth, for they saw that he was a beautiful child and refused to be daunted by the king's decree. It was also by faith that Moses himself when grown up refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He preferred sharing the burden of God's people to enjoying the temporary advantages of alliance with a sinful nation. He considered the "reproach of Christ" more precious than all the wealth of Egypt, for he looked steadily at the ultimate, not the immediate, reward.

By faith he left Egypt; he defied the king's anger with the strength that came from obedience to the invisible king.

By faith Moses kept the first Passover and made the blood sprinkling, so that the angel of death which killed the first-born should not touch his people.

By faith the people walked through the Red Sea as though it were dry land; and the Egyptians who tried to do the same thing were drowned.

II. 30 *Rahab*

It was by faith that the walls of Jericho collapsed, for the people had obeyed God's command to encircle them for seven days.

It was because of her faith that Rahab the prostitute did not share the fate of the disobedient, for she welcomed the Israelites sent out to reconnoiter.

II. 32 *The Old Testament is full of examples of faith*

And what other examples shall I give? There is simply not time to continue by telling the stories of Gideon, Barak, Samson, and Jephtha; of David, Samuel, and the prophets. Through their faith these men conquered kingdoms, ruled in justice and proved the truth of God's promises. They shut the mouths of lions, they quenched the furious blaze of fire, they escaped from death itself. From being weaklings they became strong men and mighty warriors; they routed whole armies of foreigners. Women received their dead raised to life again, while others were tortured and refused to be ransomed, because they wanted to deserve a more honorable resurrection in the world to come. Others were exposed to the test of public mockery and flogging, and to the torture of being left bound in prison. They were killed by stoning, by being sawn in two; they were tempted by specious promises of release and then were killed with the sword. Many became refugees with nothing but sheepskins or goatskins to cover them. They lost everything and yet were spurned and ill-treated by a world that was too evil to see their worth. They lived as vagrants in the desert, on the mountains, or in caves or holes in the ground.

All these won a glowing testimony to their faith, but they did not then and there receive the fulfillment of the promise. God had something better planned for our day, and it was not his plan that they should reach perfection without us.

II. I *We should consider these examples and Christ the perfect example*

Surrounded then as we are by these serried ranks of witnesses, let us strip off everything that hinders us, as well as the sin which dogs our feet, and let us run the race that we have to run with patience, our eyes fixed on Jesus the source and the goal of our faith. For he himself endured a cross and thought nothing of its shame because of the joy he knew would follow his suffering; and he is now seated at the right hand of God's throne.



Chapter 8



THE "APOSTOLIC" LETTERS

THE LETTER OF JAMES (A.D. 85-125?)

The tone of this document contrasts sharply with that of the letters of Paul. Its author reduced the reality of faith from the sense of a living communion with God in Christ to that of a merely intellectual belief (2:19). He therefore concluded that men are saved by their good works, not by their "faith" (2:24).

Several men bore the name of James in the New Testament. There was especially James, the son of Alphaeus, who became one of the twelve disciples of Jesus (Mark 3:18). It was probably in honor of this apostle that this letter was written, toward the end of the first century. According to the custom of the time, many writers would hide themselves humbly behind the names of revered leaders of the past, and compose "apostolic" letters. Their intention was not to deceive but to be unobtrusive.

THE FIRST LETTER OF PETER

This letter was written in an elegant Greek style, and represents ideas of the latter part of the first century. If we were to accept the tradition according to which it was composed by the apostle Peter himself (1:1-2), we should have to discard another tradition according to which he was crucified in Rome during the persecution of Nero (A.D. 64).

In all probability, this document was composed by Silvanus

(5:12), Paul's former travel companion, who is generally known as "Silas" (Acts 16:19; etc.) and who had been educated in Greek circles.

THE LETTER OF JUDE AND THE SECOND LETTER OF PETER (A.D. 100–125)

The short note which bears the name of Jude, a brother of James and Jesus (see Mark 6:3; Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13), was aimed at heretics within the church. In its turn, the second letter of Peter quotes from the note of Jude (II Peter 2:1–3; compare Jude, vss. 4–8, etc.) and refers to a collection of the letters of Paul which apparently was already in existence.

THE LETTER OF JAMES

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, sends greeting to the twelve dispersed tribes.

1. 2 *The Christian can even welcome trouble*

When all kinds of trials and temptations crowd into your lives, my brothers, don't resent them as intruders, but welcome them as friends! Realize that they come to test your faith and to produce in you the quality of endurance. But let the process go on until that endurance is fully developed, and you will find you have become men of mature character with the right sort of independence. And if, in the process, any of you does not know how to meet any particular problem he has only to ask God—who gives generously to all men without making them feel foolish or guilty—and he may be quite sure that the necessary wisdom will be given him. But he must ask in sincere faith without secret doubts as to whether he really wants God's help or not. The man who trusts God, but with inward reservations, is like a wave of the sea, carried forward by the wind one moment and driven back the next. That sort of man

cannot hope to receive anything from the Lord, and the life of a man of divided loyalty will reveal instability at every turn.

1. 9 *Rich and poor can be glad—for different reasons!*

The brother who is poor may be glad because God has called him to the true riches. The rich may be glad that God has shown him his spiritual poverty. For the rich man, as such, will wither away as surely as summer flowers. One day the sunrise brings a scorching wind; the grass withers at once and so do all the flowers—all that lovely sight is destroyed. Just as surely will the rich man and all his extravagant ways fall into the blight of decay.

1. 12 *No temptation comes from God, only highest good*

The man who patiently endures the temptations and trials that come to him is the truly happy man. For once his testing is complete he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to all who love him.

A man must not say when he is tempted, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, and does not himself tempt anyone. No, a man's temptation is due to the pull of his own inward desires, which can be enormously attractive. His own desire takes hold of him, and that produces sin. And sin in the long run means death—make no mistake about that, brothers of mine! But every good endowment that we possess and every complete gift that we have received must come from above, from the Father of all lights, with whom there is never the slightest variation or shadow of inconsistency. By his own wish he made us his own sons through the Word of truth, that we might be, so to speak, the first specimens of his new creation.

1. 19 *Hear God's Word and put it into practice: that is real religion*

In view of what he has made us then, dear brothers, let every man be quick to listen but slow to use his tongue, and slow to lose his temper. For man's temper is never the means of achieving God's true goodness.

Have done, then, with impurity and every other evil which touches the lives of others, and humbly accept the message that God has sown in your hearts, and which can save your souls. Don't, I beg you, only hear the message, but put it into practice; otherwise you are merely deluding yourselves. The man who simply hears and does nothing about it is like a man catching the reflection of his own face in a mirror. He sees himself, it is true, but he goes on with whatever he was doing without the slightest recollection of what sort of person he saw in the mirror. But the man who

looks into the perfect mirror of God's law, the law of liberty, and makes a habit of so doing, is not the man who sees and forgets. He puts that law into practice and he wins true happiness.

If anyone appears to be "religious" but cannot control his tongue, he deceives himself and we may be sure that his religion is useless. Religion that is pure and genuine in the sight of God the Father will show itself by such things as visiting orphans and widows in their distress and keeping oneself uncontaminated by the world.



2. 14 *The relation between faith and action*

Now what use is it, my brothers, for a man to say he "has faith" if his actions do not correspond with it? Could that sort of faith save anyone's soul? If a fellow man or woman has no clothes to wear and nothing to eat, and one of you says, "Good luck to you, I hope you'll keep warm and find enough to eat," and yet gives them nothing to meet their physical needs, what on earth is the good of that? Yet that is exactly what a bare faith without a corresponding life is like—useless and dead. If we only "have faith" man could easily challenge us by saying, "You say that you have faith and I have merely good actions. Well, all you can do is to show me a faith without corresponding actions, but I can show you by my actions that I have faith as well."

To the man who thinks that faith by itself is enough I feel inclined to say, "So you believe that there is one God? That's fine. So do all the devils in hell, and shudder in terror!" For, my dear shortsighted man, can't you see far enough to realize that faith without the right actions is dead and useless? Think of Abraham, our ancestor. Wasn't it his action which really justified him in God's sight when his faith led him to offer his son Isaac on the altar? Can't you see that his faith and his actions were, so to speak, partners—that his faith was implemented by his deed? That is what the scripture means when it says,

And Abraham believed God,
And it was reckoned unto him for righteousness;
And he was called the friend of God.

A man is justified before God by what he does as well as by what he believes. Rahab, who was a prostitute and a foreigner, has been quoted as an example of faith, yet surely it was her action that pleased God, when she welcomed Joshua's reconnoitering party and sent them safely back by a different route.

Yes, faith without action is as dead as a body without a soul.



THE FIRST LETTER OF PETER

Peter, a messenger of Jesus Christ, sends this letter to the exiles of the dispersed tribes (in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia), whom God the Father knew and chose long ago to be made holy by his Spirit, that they might obey Jesus Christ and be cleansed by his blood: may you know more and more of God's grace and peace.

1. 3 *Your faith is being tested, but your future is magnificent*

Thank God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that in his great mercy we men have been born again into a life full of hope, through Christ's rising again from the dead! You can now hope for a perfect inheritance beyond the reach of change and decay, "reserved" in Heaven for you. And in the meantime you are guarded by the power of God operating through your faith, till you enter fully into the salvation which is all ready for the dénouement of the last day.



The Word referred to, as far as you are concerned, is the message of the gospel that was preached to you.

Have done, then, with all evil and deceit, all pretense and jealousy and slander. You are babies, newborn in God's family, and you should be crying out for unadulterated spiritual milk to make you grow up to salvation! And so you will, if you have already tasted the goodness of the Lord.

To change the metaphor, you come to him, as living stones to the immensely valuable living stone (which men rejected but God chose), to be built up into a spiritual House of God, in which you, like holy priests, can offer those spiritual sacrifices which are acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. There is a passage to this effect in scripture, and it runs like this:

Behold I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious:
And he that believeth on him shall not be put to shame.

It is to you who believe in him that he is "precious," but to those who disobey God it is true that

The stone which the builders rejected,
The same was made the head of the corner.

And he is, to them,

A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.

Yes, they stumble at the Word of God for in their hearts they are unwilling to obey it—which makes stumbling a foregone conclusion. But you are God's "chosen generation," his "royal priesthood," his "holy nation," his "peculiar people"—all the old titles of God's people now belong to you. It is for you now to demonstrate the goodness of him who has called you out of darkness into his amazing light. In the past you were not "a people" at all: now you are the people of God. In the past you had no experience of his mercy, but now it is intimately yours.



5. 12 *Final greetings*

I am sending this short letter by Silvanus, whom I know to be a faithful brother, to stimulate your faith and assure you that the above words represent the true grace of God. See that you stand fast in that grace!

Your sister-church here in "Babylon" sends you greetings, and so does my son Mark. Give one another a handshake all round as a sign of love.

Peace be to all true Christians.

THE SECOND LETTER OF PETER

Simon Peter, a servant and messenger of Jesus Christ, sends this letter to those who have been given a faith as valuable as ours in the righteousness of God, and our savior Jesus Christ. May you

know more and more of grace and peace as your knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord grows deeper.

1. 3 *God has done his part: see that you do yours*

He has by his own action given us everything that is necessary for living the truly good life, in allowing us to know the one who has called us to him, through his own glorious goodness. It is through him that God's greatest and most precious promises have become available to us men, making it possible for you to escape the inevitable disintegration that lust produces in the world and to share God's essential nature.



3. 1 *God delays the last day, in his mercy*

This is the second letter I have written to you, dear friends of mine, and in both of them I have tried to stimulate you, as men with minds uncontaminated by error, by simply reminding you of what you really know already. For I want you to remember the words spoken of old by the holy prophets as well as the commands of our Lord and savior, given to you through his messengers.

First of all you must realize that in the last days mockers will undoubtedly come—men whose only guide in life is what they want for themselves—and they will say, "What has happened to his promised coming? Since the first Christians fell asleep, everything remains exactly as it was since the beginning of creation!" They are deliberately shutting their eyes to a fact that they know very well, that there were, by God's command, heavens in the old days and an earth formed out of the water and surrounded by water. It was by water that the world of those days was deluged and destroyed, but the present heavens and earth are, also by God's command, being carefully kept and maintained for the fire of the day of judgment and the destruction of wicked men.

But you should never lose sight of this fact, dear friends, that time is not the same with the Lord as it is with us—to him a day may be a thousand years, and a thousand years only a day. It is not that he is dilatory about keeping his own promise as some men seem to think; the fact is that he is very patient toward you. He has no wish that any man should be destroyed: he wishes that all men should come to repent. Yet it remains true that the day of the Lord will come as suddenly and unexpectedly as a thief. In that day the heavens will disappear in a terrific tearing blast; the very elements will disintegrate in heat and the earth and all that is in it will be burned up to nothing.

3. II *Never lose sight of the eternal world*

In view of the fact that all of these things are to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be? Surely men of good and holy character, who live expecting and earnestly longing for the coming of the day of God. True, this day will mean that the heavens will disappear in fire and the elements disintegrate in fearful heat, but our hopes are set not on these but on the new heavens and the new earth which he has promised us, and in which nothing but good shall live.

Because, my dear friends, you have a hope like this before you, I urge you to make certain that such a day would find you at peace with God and man, clean and blameless in his sight. Meanwhile, consider that God's patience is meant to be man's salvation, as our dear brother Paul pointed out in his letter to you, written out of the wisdom God gave him. In that letter, as indeed in all his letters, he referred to these matters. There are, of course, some things in his letters which are difficult to understand, and which, unhappily, ill-informed and unbalanced people distort (as they do the other scriptures), and bring disaster on their own heads.

But you, my friends whom I love, are forewarned, and should therefore be very careful not to be carried away by the errors of wicked men and so lose your proper foothold. On the contrary, you should grow in grace and in your knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ—to him be glory now and until the dawning of the day of eternity!

Chapter 9



THE JOHANNINE WRITINGS

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

The fourth gospel differs markedly from the synoptic gospels. In the first place, "John" used a literary plan of his own. Instead of reporting the Galilean ministry of Jesus, followed by a period of travels, and concluded by a period of a few days in Jerusalem, he described the public life of Jesus as shifting back and forth between Galilee in the north and Jerusalem in the south. Moreover, while the ministry of Jesus in the synoptics appears to have lasted only several months (from the summer of the year 28–29 to the spring of the year 29–30), the activity of Jesus, in John, lasted at least three years. In the second place, while the fourth evangelist apparently knew the synoptic gospels, he ignored most of their material and included many stories which are not found in the first three gospels. He told of only seven miracles of healing, most of which are occasions for long discourses. For example, the healing of the blind man introduces the sermon on "the light of the world" (9:1–40). In the third place, John presented a picture of Jesus as more divine than human, and sinless, fearless, and eternal ("Before Abraham was, I am"; 8:58). John's purpose was apparently to express in the form of a story of Jesus his own experience of the living Christ, and his meditations on the Word made flesh (1:1–5). In this gospel, the Eternal Son of God speaks.

Such a literary method may surprise the modern Western mind, but it was far from unusual in the ancient world. For example, the historian Xenophon in his *Memorabilia* told the life and death of Socrates in a simple manner, which calls to mind the style of the synoptic gospels. On the other hand, the philosopher Plato, in his *Dialogues*, created sayings of Socrates which may be compared in

manner, although not in substance, to the lengthy discourses of Jesus in the fourth gospel.

John openly stated his intention to share his faith in the living presence of Christ (20:31). He wrote at a time when Christians were beginning to despair of the prompt return of their Lord. He showed them that eternal life is a mode of being which begins even now, and that the Holy Spirit, the Comforter or the Counselor, always accompanies the Christian on this earth (16:12-15).

According to Clement of Alexandria, in the third century A.D., "after the other evangelists put down the facts of history about Jesus, John wrote a spiritual gospel." The author of this book may have disguised himself as "the beloved disciple" who appears several times anonymously (13:23; 18:15; 19:26-27; 20:28; 21:7, 20, 24). Christian tradition identified him with John, the son of Zebedee, and the brother of the James who was killed in Jerusalem in A.D. 42 (Acts 12:2).

Is the author of this meditation on the serenity of life with Christ, and admittedly the disciples whom Jesus loved, the same ebullient and even fiery man whom Jesus twice rebuked (Mark 10:35; Luke 9:54)? This is not impossible, but scholars have pointed to many difficulties.

Since the gospel and the three letters which bear the same name "John" present similar style and ideas, we may assume an identity of authorship for all four documents. Furthermore, the second and third letters are explicitly ascribed to a certain "John the Elder," who lived in Ephesus at the end of the first century. Therefore, it is possible that the fourth gospel was also composed at Ephesus by John the Elder.

THE THREE LETTERS OF JOHN THE ELDER

The author is manifestly an old man who bears witness to the Word of Life manifested on this earth. He advocates brotherly love as the essence of Christian behavior.

THE APOCALYPSE, OR REVELATION OF JOHN THE DIVINE

The last book of the New Testament differs in style and content from all those which precede it. A certain "John," exiled on the

island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea, not far from Ephesus, wrote seven letters to seven churches of western Asia Minor (1:1—3:22) and recorded his visions of the end of the world and of the last judgment (4:1—20:15). He concluded with a description of the heavenly Jerusalem (21:1—22:21).

Writing in a time of intense persecution, probably during the reign of Domitian (A.D. 81–96), John the Divine announced the downfall of Rome under the code name of “Babylon.” The mysterious Beast, whose number is “666” (13:18), probably designates the Roman emperors through the numerical anagram of Nero, the most malicious monster within memory. (The numbers of the letters NERON KAISAR, *Caesar Nero*, according to their respective places in the Hebrew alphabet, form a total sum of 666.)

The book of Revelation assumes a profound significance, in spite of its weird imagery, when it is viewed as a call for hope in the midst of horrible tortures. The men and women who were waiting in basement cells to be thrown to lions and leopards on the next day before mobs in festive arenas, could encourage one another with the visions of a new heaven and a new earth, with a holy city where there would be no night, and where tears would be wiped away forever. Since that time, countless people have gone to their death with the supplication which now ends the New Testament, *Maranatha*, “Lord Jesus, come!” (22:20).

At the same time, John the Divine had not given hope for the world of history. He saw the tree of life whose “leaves were for the healing of the nations” (22:2).

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

I. I *Prologue*

At the beginning God expressed himself. That personal expression, that word, was with God and was God, and it existed with God from the beginning. All creation took place through him, and none took place without him. In him appeared life and this life was the light of mankind. The light still shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out.

I. 6 *The gospel's beginning on earth*

A man called John was sent by God as a witness to the light, so that any man who heard his testimony might believe in the light. This man was not himself the light: he was sent simply as a personal witness to that light.

That was the true light which shines upon every man as he comes into the world. He came into the world—the world he had created—and the world failed to recognize him. He came into his own creation, and his own people would not accept him. Yet wherever men did accept him he gave them the power to become sons of God. These were the men who truly believed in him, and their birth depended not on the course of nature nor on any impulse or plan of man, but on God.

So the word of God became a human being and lived among us. We saw his splendor (the splendor as of a father's only son), full of grace and truth. And it was about him that John stood up and testified, exclaiming: "Here is the one I was speaking about when I said that although he would come after me he would always be in front of me; for he existed before I was born!" Indeed, every one of us has shared in his riches—there is a grace in our lives because of his grace. For while the Law was given by Moses, love and truth came through Jesus Christ. It is true that no one has ever seen God at any time. Yet the divine and only Son, who lives in the closest intimacy with the Father, has made him known.

I. 19 *John's witness*

This then is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. He admitted with complete candor, "I am not Christ."

So they asked him, "Who are you then? Are you Elijah?"

"No. I am not," he replied.

"Are you the Prophet?"

"No," he replied.

"Well, then," they asked again, "who are you? We want to give an answer to the people who sent us. What would you call yourself?"

"I am a voice shouting in the desert, '*Make straight the way of the Lord*!' as Isaiah the prophet said."

Now some of the Pharisees had been sent to John, and they questioned him: "What is the reason, then, for your baptizing people if you are not Christ and not Elijah and not the Prophet?"

To which John returned, "I do baptize—with water. But somewhere among you stands a man you do not know. He comes after me, it is true, but I am not fit to undo his shoes!" (All this happened in Bethany on the far side of the Jordan where the baptisms of John took place.)

On the following day, John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, there is the lamb of God who will take away the sin of the world!"

2. 1 *The Son of God and a village wedding*

Two days later there was a wedding in the Galilean village of Cana. Jesus' mother was there and he and his disciples were invited to the festivities. Then it happened that the supply of wine gave out, and Jesus' mother told him, "They have no more wine."

"Is that your concern, or mine?" replied Jesus. "My time has not come yet."

So his mother said to the servants, "Mind you do whatever he tells you."

In the room six very large stone water jars stood on the floor (actually for the Jewish ceremonial cleansing), each holding about twenty gallons. Jesus gave instructions for these jars to be filled with water, and the servants filled them to the brim. Then he said to them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of ceremonies," which they did. When this man tasted the water, which had now become wine, without knowing where it came from

(though naturally the servants who had drawn the water knew), he called out to the bridegroom and said to him, "Everybody I know puts his good wine on first and then when men have had plenty to drink, he brings out the poor stuff. But you have kept back your good wine till now!" Jesus gave this, the first of his signs, at Cana in Galilee. He demonstrated his power and his disciples believed in him.

2. 12 *Jesus in the Temple*

After this incident, Jesus, accompanied by his mother, his brothers, and his disciples, went down to Capernaum and stayed there a few days. Then Jesus made the journey up to Jerusalem. In the Temple he discovered cattle and sheep dealers and pigeon sellers, as well as money-changers sitting at their tables. So he made a rough whip out of rope and drove the whole lot of them, sheep and cattle as well, out of the Temple. He sent the coins of the money-changers flying and turned their tables upside down. Then he said to the pigeon dealers, "Take those things out of here. Don't you dare turn my Father's house into a market!" His disciples remembered the scripture—

The zeal of thine house shall eat me up.

As a result of this, the Jews said to him, "What sign can you give us to justify what you are doing?"

"Destroy this temple," Jesus retorted, "and I will rebuild it in three days!"

To which the Jews replied, "This Temple took forty-six years to build, and are you going to rebuild it in three days?"

He was, in fact, speaking about the temple of his own body, and when he was raised from the dead the disciples remembered what he had said to them and that made them believe both the scripture and what Jesus had said.



3. 1 *Jesus and a religious leader*

One night Nicodemus, a leading Jew and a Pharisee, came to see Jesus.

"Master," he began, "we realize that you are a teacher who has come from God. Obviously no one could show the signs that you show unless God were with him."

"Believe me," returned Jesus, "a man cannot even see the kingdom of God without being born again."

"And how can a man who's getting old possibly be born?" replied

Nicodemus. "How can he go back into his mother's womb and be born a second time?"

"I assure you," said Jesus, "that unless a man is born from water and from spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Flesh gives birth to flesh and spirit gives birth to spirit: you must not be surprised that I told you that all of you must be born again. The wind blows where it likes; you can hear the sound of it but you have no idea where it comes from and where it goes. Nor can you tell how a man is born by the wind of the Spirit."

"How on earth can things like this happen?" replied Nicodemus.

"So you are a teacher of Israel," said Jesus, "and you do not recognize such things? I assure you that we are talking about something we really know and we are witnessing to something we have actually observed, yet men like you will not accept our evidence. Yet if I have spoken to you about things which happen on this earth and you will not believe me, what chance is there that you will believe me if I tell you about what happens in Heaven? No one has ever been up to Heaven except the Son of Man who came down from Heaven. The Son of Man must be lifted above the heads of men—as Moses lifted up that serpent in the desert—so that any man who believes in him may have eternal life. For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son so that everyone who believes in him should not be lost, but should have eternal life. You must understand that God has not sent his Son into the world to pass sentence upon it, but to save it—through him.



4. *I Jesus meets a Samaritan woman*

Now, when the Lord found that the Pharisees had heard that "Jesus is making and baptizing more disciples than John"—although, in fact, it was not Jesus who did the baptizing but his disciples—he left Judaea and went off again to Galilee, which meant his passing through Samaria. There he came to a little town called Sychar, which is near the historic plot of land that Jacob gave to his son Joseph, and "Jacob's Spring" was there. Jesus, tired with the journey, sat down beside it, just as he was. The time was about midday. Presently, a Samaritan woman arrived to draw some water.

"Please give me a drink," Jesus said to her, for his disciples had gone away to the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, "How can you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)

"If you knew what God can give," Jesus replied, "and if you

knew who it is that said to you, 'Give me a drink,' I think you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water!"

"Sir," said the woman, "you have nothing to draw water with and this well is deep—where can you get your living water? Are you a greater man than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well, and drank here himself with his family, and his cattle?"

Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again. But whoever drinks the water I will give him will never be thirsty again. For my gift will become a spring in the man himself, welling up into eternal life."

The woman said, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may stop being thirsty—and not have to come here to draw water any more!"

"Go and call your husband and then come back here," said Jesus to her.

"I haven't got a husband!" the woman answered.

"You are quite right in saying, 'I haven't got a husband,'" replied Jesus, "for you have had five husbands and the man you have now is not your husband at all. Yes, you spoke the simple truth when you said that."

"Sir," said the woman again, "I can see that you are a prophet! Now our ancestors worshiped on this hillside, but you Jews say that Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship—"

"Believe me," returned Jesus, "the time is coming when worshipping the Father will not be a matter of 'on this hillside' or 'in Jerusalem.' Nowadays you are worshipping with your eyes shut. We Jews are worshipping with our eyes open, for the salvation of mankind is to come from our race. Yet the time is coming, yes, and has already come, when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in reality. Indeed, the Father looks for men who will worship him like that. God is Spirit, and those who worship him can only worship in spirit and in reality."

"Of course I know that Messiah is coming," returned the woman, "you know, the one who is called Christ. When he comes he will make everything plain to us."

"I am Christ, speaking to you now," said Jesus.



6. 1 *Jesus shows his power over material things*

After this, Jesus crossed the Lake of Galilee (or Tiberias), and a great crowd followed him because they had seen the signs which he gave in his dealings with the sick. But Jesus went up the hillside and sat down there with his disciples. The Passover, the Jewish

festival, was near. So Jesus, raising his eyes and seeing a great crowd on their way toward him, said to Philip, "Where can we buy food for these people to eat?" (He said this to test Philip, for he himself knew what he was going to do.)

"Ten dollars' worth of bread would not be enough for them," Philip replied, "even if they had only a little each."

Then Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, another disciple, put in, "There is a boy here who has five small barley loaves and a couple of fish, but what's the good of that for such a crowd?"

Then Jesus said, "Get the people to sit down."

There was plenty of grass there, and the men, some five thousand of them, sat down. Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks for them and distributed them to the people sitting on the grass, and he distributed the fish in the same way, giving them as much as they wanted. When they had eaten enough, Jesus said to his disciples, "Collect the pieces that are left over so that nothing is wasted."

So they did as he suggested and filled twelve baskets with the broken pieces of the five barley loaves, which were left over after the people had eaten! When the men saw this sign of Jesus' power, they kept saying, "This certainly is the Prophet who was to come into the world!"

Then Jesus, realizing that they were going to carry him off and make him their king, retired once more to the hillside quite alone.

In the evening his disciples went down to the lake, embarked on the boat and made their way across the lake to Capernaum.



6. 22 *Jesus teaches about the true bread*

The following day, the crowd, who had remained on the other side of the lake, noticed that only the one boat had been there, and that Jesus had not embarked on it with his disciples, but that they had in fact gone off by themselves. Some other small boats from Tiberias had landed quite near the place where they had eaten the food and the Lord had given thanks. When the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor the disciples were there any longer, they themselves got into the boats and went off to Capernaum to look for Jesus. When they had found him on the other side of the lake, they said to him, "Master, when did you come here?"

"Believe me," replied Jesus, "you are looking for me now not because you saw my signs but because you ate that food and had all you wanted. You should not work for the food which does not last but for that food which lasts on into eternal life. This is the

food the Son of Man will give you, and he is the one who bears the stamp of God the Father.”

This made them ask him, “What must we do to carry out the work of God?”

“The work of God for you,” replied Jesus, “is to believe in the one whom he has sent to you.”

Then they asked him, “Then what sign can you give us that will make us believe in you? What work are you doing? Our forefathers ate manna in the desert just as the scripture says:

He gave them bread out of Heaven to eat.”

To which Jesus replied, “Yes, but what matters is not that Moses *gave you* bread from Heaven but that my Father *is giving you* the true bread from Heaven. For the bread of God which comes down from Heaven gives life to the world.”

This made them say to him, “Lord, please give us this bread, always!”

Then Jesus said to them, “I myself am the bread of life. The man who comes to me will never be hungry and the man who believes in me will never again be thirsty. Yet I have told you that you have seen me and do not believe. Everything that my Father gives me will come to me and I will never refuse anyone who comes to me. For I have come down from Heaven, not to do what I want, but to do the will of him who sent me. The will of him who sent me is that I should not lose anything of what he has given me, but should raise it up when the last day comes. And this is the will of the one who sent me, that everyone who sees the Son and trusts him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up when the last day comes.”



10. I *Jesus declares himself the true shepherd of men*

Then Jesus said, “Believe me when I tell you that anyone who does not enter the sheepfold through the door, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a rogue. It is the shepherd of the flock who goes in by the door. It is to him the doorkeeper opens the door and it is his voice that the sheep recognize. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out of the fold, and when he has driven all his own flock outside, he goes in front of them himself, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will never follow a stranger—indeed, they will run away from him, for they do not recognize strange voices.”

Jesus gave them this illustration, but they did not grasp the point of what he was saying to them. So Jesus said to them once more,

"I do assure you that I myself am the door for the sheep. All who have gone before me are like thieves and rogues, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If a man goes in through me, he will be safe and sound; he can come in and out and find his food. The thief comes with the sole intention of stealing and killing and destroying, but I came to bring them life, and far more life than before. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd will give his life for the sake of his sheep. But the hired man, who is not the shepherd, and does not own the sheep, will see the wolf coming, desert the sheep and run away. And the wolf will attack the flock and send them flying. The hired man runs away because he is only a hired man and has no interest in the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I know those that are mine and my sheep know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I am giving my life for the sake of the sheep.

"And I have other sheep who do not belong to this fold. I must lead these also, and they will hear my voice. So there will be one flock and one shepherd. This is the reason why the Father loves me—that I lay down my life, and I lay it down to take it up again! No one is taking it from me, but I lay it down of my own free will. I have the power to lay it down and I have the power to take it up again. This is an order that I have received from my Father."



II. I *Jesus shows his power over death*

Now there was a man by the name of Lazarus who became seriously ill. He lived in Bethany, the village where Mary and her sister Martha lived. (Lazarus was the brother of the Mary who poured perfume upon the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) So the sisters sent word to Jesus: "Lord, your friend is very ill."

When Jesus received the message, he said, "This illness is not meant to end in death; it is going to bring glory to God—for it will show the glory of the Son of God."

Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard of Lazarus' illness he stayed where he was two days longer. Only then did he say to the disciples, "Let us go back into Judaea."

"Master!" returned the disciples, "only a few days ago, the Jews were trying to stone you to death—are you going there again?"

"There are twelve hours of daylight every day, are there not?" replied Jesus. "If a man walks in the daytime, he does not stumble, for he has the daylight to see by. But if he walks at night he stumbles, because he cannot see where he is going."

Jesus spoke these words; then after a pause he said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going to wake him up."

At this, his disciples said, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right."

Actually Jesus had spoken about his death, but they thought that he was speaking about falling into natural sleep. This made Jesus tell them quite plainly: "Lazarus has died, and I am glad that I was not there—for your sakes, that you may learn to believe. And now, let us go to him."

Thomas (known as the twin) then said to his fellow disciples, "Come on, then, let us all go and die with him!"

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the grave four days. Now Bethany is quite near Jerusalem, less than two miles away, and a good many of the Jews had come out to see Martha and Mary to offer them sympathy over their brother's death. When Martha heard that Jesus was on his way, she went out and met him, while Mary stayed in the house.

"If only you had been here, Lord," said Martha, "my brother would never have died. And I know that, even now, God will give you whatever you ask from him."

"Your brother will rise again," Jesus replied to her.

"I know," said Martha, "that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

"I myself am the resurrection and the life," Jesus told her. "The man who believes in me will live even though he dies, and anyone who is alive and believes in me will never die at all. Can you believe that?"

"Yes, Lord," replied Martha. "I do believe that you are Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into the world." Saying this she went away and called Mary her sister, whispering, "The master's here and is asking for you." When Mary heard this she sprang to her feet and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet arrived at the village itself, but was still where Martha had met him. So when the Jews who had been condoling with Mary in the house saw her get up quickly and go out, they followed her, imagining that she was going to the grave to weep there.

When Mary met Jesus, she looked at him and then fell down at his feet. "If only you had been here, Lord," she said, "my brother would never have died."

When Jesus saw Mary weep and noticed the tears of the Jews who came with her, he was deeply moved and visibly distressed.

"Where have you put him?" he asked.

"Lord, come and see," they replied, and at this Jesus himself wept.

"Look how much he loved him!" remarked the Jews, though some of them asked, "Could he not have kept this man from dying if he could open that blind man's eyes?"

Jesus was again deeply moved at these words, and went on to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay in front of it.

"Take away the stone," said Jesus.

"But, Lord," said Martha, the dead man's sister, "he has been dead four days. By this time he will be decaying. . . ."

"Did I not tell you," replied Jesus, "that if you believed, you would see the wonder of what God can do?"

Then they took the stone away, and Jesus raised his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I know that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of these people standing here so that they may believe that you have sent me."

And when he had said this, he called out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"

And the dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with graveclothes and his face muffled with a handkerchief.

"Now unbind him," Jesus told them, "and let him go home."



12. I *An act of love as the end approaches*

Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, the village of Lazarus whom he had raised from the dead. They gave a supper for him there, and Martha waited on the party while Lazarus took his place at table with Jesus. Then Mary took a whole pound of very expensive perfume and anointed Jesus' feet and then wiped them with her hair. The entire house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot (the man who was going to betray Jesus), burst out: "Why on earth wasn't this perfume sold? It's worth thirty dollars, which could have been given to the poor!"

He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was dishonest, and when he was in charge of the purse used to help himself from the contents.

But Jesus replied to this outburst, "Let her alone, let her keep this for the day of my burial. You have the poor with you always—you will not always have me!"



Among those who had come up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They approached Philip (whose home town was Bethsaida in Galilee) with the request, "Sir, we want to see Jesus."

Philip went and told Andrew, and Andrew went with Philip and told Jesus.

Jesus told them: "The time has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you truly that unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains a single grain of wheat; but if it dies, it brings a good harvest. The man who loves his own life will destroy it, and the man who hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life. If a man wants to enter my service, he must follow my way; and where I am, my servant will also be. And my Father will honor every man who enters my service.

"Now comes my hour of heartbreak, and what can I say—'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very purpose that I came to this hour. 'Father, honor your own name!'"

At this there came a voice from Heaven, "I have honored it and I will honor it again!"

When the crowd of bystanders heard this, they said it thundered, but some of them said, "An angel spoke to him."

Then Jesus said, "That voice came for your sake, not for mine. Now is the time for the judgment of this world to begin, and now will the spirit that rules this world be driven out. As for me, if I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to myself." (He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.)



14. 1 *Jesus reveals spiritual truths*

"You must not let yourselves be distressed—you must hold on to your faith in God and to your faith in me. There are many rooms in my Father's House. If there were not, should I have told you that I am going away to prepare a place for you? It is true that I am going away to prepare a place for you, but it is just as true that I am coming again to welcome you into my own home, so that you may be where I am. You know where I am going and you know the road I am going to take."

"Lord," Thomas remonstrated, "we do not know where you're going, and how can we know what road you're going to take?"

"I myself am the road," replied Jesus, "and the truth and the life. No one approaches the Father except through me. If you had known who I am, you would have known my Father. From now on, you do know him and you have seen him."

14. 8 *Jesus explains his relationship with the Father*

Then Philip said to him, "Show us the Father, Lord, and we shall be satisfied."

"Have I been such a long time with you," returned Jesus,

"without your really knowing me, Philip? The man who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The very words I say to you are not my own. It is the Father who lives in me who carries out his work through me. Do you believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? But if you cannot, then believe me because of what you see me do. I assure you that the man who believes in me will do the same things that I have done, yes, and he will do even greater things than these, for I am going away to the Father. Whatever you ask the Father in my name, I will do—that the Son may bring glory to the Father. And if you ask me anything in my name, I will grant it.

14. 15 *Jesus promises the Spirit*

"If you really love me, you will keep the commandments I have given you and I shall ask the Father to give you someone else to stand by you, to be with you always. I mean the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept, for it can neither see nor recognize that Spirit. But you recognize him, for he is with you now and will be in your hearts. I am not going to leave you alone in the world—I am coming to you. In a very little while, the world will see me no more but you will see me, because I am really alive and you will be alive too. When that day comes, you will realize that I am in my Father, that you are in me, and I am in you.

"Every man who knows my commandments and obeys them is the man who really loves me, and every man who really loves me will himself be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and make myself known to him."

Then Judas (not Iscariot) said, "Lord, how is it that you are going to make yourself known to us but not to the world?"

And to this Jesus replied: "When a man loves me, he follows my teaching. Then my Father will love him, and we will come to that man and make our home within him. The man who does not really love me will not follow my teaching. Indeed, what you are hearing from me now is not really my saying, but comes from the Father who sent me.

"I have said all this while I am still with you. But the one who is coming to stand by you, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will be your teacher and will bring to your minds all that I have said to you.

"I leave behind with you—peace; I give you my own peace and my gift is nothing like the peace of this world. You must not be

distressed and you must not be daunted. You have heard me say, 'I am going away and I am coming back to you.' If you really loved me, you would be glad because I am going to my Father, for my Father is greater than I. And I have told you of it now, before it happens, so that when it does happen your faith in me will not be shaken. I shall not be able to talk much longer to you, for the spirit that rules this world is coming very close. He has no hold over me, but I go on my way to show the world that I love the Father and to do what he sent me to do. . . . Get up now! Let us leave this place.

15. 1 *Jesus teaches union with himself*

"I am the real vine; my Father is the vinedresser. He removes any of my branches which are not bearing fruit and he prunes every branch that does bear fruit to increase its yield. Now, you have already been pruned by my words. You must go on growing in me and I will grow in you. For just as the branch cannot bear any fruit unless it shares the life of the vine, so you can produce nothing unless you go on growing in me. I am the vine itself; you are the branches. It is the man who shares my life and whose life I share who proves fruitful. For the plain fact is that apart from me you can do nothing at all. The man who does not share my life is like a branch that is broken off and withers away. He becomes just like the dry sticks that men pick up and use for firewood. But if you live your life in me, and my words live in your hearts, you can ask for whatever you like and it will come true for you. This is how my Father will be glorified—in your becoming faithful and being my disciples.

"I have loved you just as the Father has loved me. You must go on living in my love. If you keep my commandments you will live in my love just as I have kept my Father's commandments and live in his love. I have told you this so that you can share my joy, and that your happiness may be complete. This is my commandment: that you love one another as I have loved you. There is no greater love than this—that a man should lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I tell you to do. I shall not call you servants any longer, for a servant does not share his master's confidence. No, I call you friends, now, because I have told you everything that I have heard from the Father.

"It is not that you have chosen me; but it is I who have chosen you. I have appointed you to go and bear fruit that will be lasting; so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you.



16. 1 *Jesus speaks of the future without his bodily presence*

"I am telling you this now so that your faith in me may not be shaken. They will excommunicate you from their synagogues. Yes, the time is coming when a man who kills you will think he is thereby serving God! They will act like this because they have never had any true knowledge of the Father or of me, but I have told you all this so that when the time comes for it to happen you may remember that I told you about it. I have not spoken like this to you before, because I have been with you; but now the time has come for me to go away to the one who sent me. None of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' That is because you are so distressed at what I have told you. Yet I am telling you the simple truth when I assure you that it is a good thing for you that I should go away. For if I did not go away, the divine helper would not come to you. But if I go, then I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convince the world of the meaning of sin, of true goodness, and judgment. He will expose their sin because they do not believe in me; he will reveal true goodness for I am going away to the Father and you will see me no longer; and he will show them the meaning of judgment, for the spirit which rules this world will have been judged.

"I have much more to tell you but you cannot bear it now. Yet when that one I have spoken to you about comes—the Spirit of truth—he will guide you into everything that is true. For he will be speaking not of his own accord but exactly as he hears, and he will inform you about what is to come. He will bring glory to me, for he will draw on my truth and reveal it to you. Whatever the Father possesses is also mine; that is why I tell you that he will draw on my truth and will show it to you.

16. 25 *Jesus speaks further of the future*

"I have been speaking to you in parables—but the time is coming to give up parables and tell you plainly about the Father. When that time comes, you will make your requests to him in my name, for I need make no promise to plead to the Father for you, for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. Yes, I did come from the Father and I came into the world. Now I leave the world behind and return to the Father."

"Now you are speaking plainly," cried the disciples, "and are not using parables. Now we know that everything is known to

you—no more questions are needed. This makes us sure that you did come from God.”

“So you believe in me now?” replied Jesus. “The time is coming, indeed, it has already come, when you will be scattered, every one of you going home and leaving me alone. Yet I am not really alone, for the Father is with me. I have told you all this so that you may find your peace in me. You will find trouble in the world—but never lose heart: I have conquered the world!”

17. 1 *Jesus' prayer for his disciples—present and future*

When Jesus had said these words, he raised his eyes to Heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son now so that he may bring glory to you, for you have given him authority over all men to give eternal life to all that you have given to him. And this is eternal life, to know you, the only true God, and him whom you have sent—Jesus Christ.

“I have brought you honor upon earth, I have completed the task which you gave me to do. Now, Father, honor me in your own presence with the glory that I knew with you before the world was made. I have shown your self to the men whom you gave me from the world. They were your men and you gave them to me, and they have accepted your word. Now they realize that all that you have given me comes from you—and that every message that you gave me I have given them. They have accepted it all and have come to know in their hearts that I did come from you—they are convinced that you sent me.

“I am praying to you for them: I am not praying for the world but for the men whom you gave me, for they are yours—everything that is mine is yours and yours mine—and they have done me honor. Now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world and I am returning to you. Holy Father, keep the men you gave me by your power that they may be one, as we are one. As long as I was with them, I kept them by the power that you gave me; I guarded them, and not one of them was destroyed, except the son of destruction—that the scripture might come true.

“And now I come to you and I say these things in the world that these men may find my joy completed in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them, for they are no more sons of the world than I am. I am not praying that you will take them out of the world but that you will keep them from the evil one. They are no more the sons of the world than I am—make them holy by the truth for your word is the truth. I have sent them to the world just as you sent me to the world and I consecrate myself for their sakes that they may be made holy by the truth.

"I am not praying only for these men but for all those who will believe in me through their message, that they may all be one. Just as you, Father, live in me and I live in you, I am asking that they may live in us, that the world may believe that you did send me. I have given them the honor that you gave me, that they may grow complete into one, so that the world may realize that you sent me and have loved them as you loved me. Father, I want those whom you have given me to be with me where I am; I want them to see that glory which you have made mine—for you loved me before the world began. Father of goodness and truth, the world has not known you, but I have known you and these men now know that you have sent me. I have made your self known to them and I will continue to do so that the love which you have had for me may be in their hearts—and that I may be there also."



18. 28 *Jesus is taken before the Roman authority*

Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas' presence into the palace. It was now early morning and the Jews themselves did not go into the palace, for fear that they would be contaminated and would not be able to eat the Passover. So Pilate walked out to them and said, "What is the charge that you are bringing against this man?"

"If he were not an evildoer, we should not have handed him over to you," they replied.

To which Pilate retorted, "Then take him yourselves and judge him according to your law."

"We are not allowed to put a man to death," replied the Jews (thus fulfilling Christ's prophecy of the method of his own death).

So Pilate went back into the palace and called Jesus to him. "Are you the king of the Jews?" he asked.

"Are you asking this of your own accord," replied Jesus, "or have other people spoken to you about me?"

"Do you think *I* am a Jew?" replied Pilate. "It's your people and your chief priests who handed you over to me. What have you done, anyway?"

"My kingdom is not founded in this world—if it were, my servants would have fought to prevent my being handed over to the Jews. But in fact my kingdom is not founded on all this!"

"So you are a king, are you?" returned Pilate.

"Indeed I am a king," Jesus replied; "the reason for my birth and the reason for my coming into the world is to witness to the truth. Every man who loves truth recognizes my voice."

To which Pilate retorted, "What is 'truth'?" and went straight out again to the Jews and said:

"I find nothing criminal about him at all. But I have an arrangement with you to set one prisoner free at Passover time. Do you wish me then to set free for you the 'king of the Jews'?"

At this, they shouted out again, "No, not this man, but Barabbas!"

Barabbas was a bandit.

19. *I Pilate's vain efforts to save Jesus*

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged, and the soldiers twisted thorn twigs into a crown and put it on his head, threw a purple robe around him, and kept coming into his presence, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And then they slapped him with their open hands.

Then Pilate went outside again and said to them, "Look, I bring him out before you here, to show that I find nothing criminal about him at all."

And at this Jesus came outside too, wearing the thorn crown and the purple robe.

"Look," said Pilate, "here's the man!"

The sight of him made the chief priests and Jewish officials shout at the top of their voices, "Crucify! Crucify!"

"You take him and crucify him," retorted Pilate. "He's no criminal as far as I can see!"

The Jews answered him, "We have a Law, and according to that Law, he must die, for he made himself out to be Son of God!"

When Pilate heard them say this, he became much more uneasy, and returned to the palace and spoke to Jesus: "Where *do* you come from?"

But Jesus gave him no reply. So Pilate said to him, "Won't you speak to me? Don't you realize that I have the power to set you free, and I have the power to have you crucified?"

"You have no power at all against me," replied Jesus, "except what was given to you from above. And for that reason the one who handed me over to you is even more guilty than you are."

From that moment Pilate tried hard to set him free, but the Jews were shouting: "If you set this man free, you are no friend of Caesar! Anyone who makes himself out to be a king is anti-Caesar!"

When Pilate heard this, he led Jesus outside and sat down upon the Judgment seat in the place called the Pavement (in Hebrew, Gabbatha). It was the preparation day of the Passover and it was now getting on toward midday. Pilate now said to the Jews, "Look, here's your king!"

At which they yelled, "Take him away, take him away, crucify him!"

"Am I to crucify your king?" Pilate asked them.

"Caesar is our king and no one else," replied the chief priests. And at this Pilate handed Jesus over to them for crucifixion.

19. 17 *The crucifixion*

So they took Jesus and he went out carrying the cross himself, to a place called Skull Hill (in Hebrew, Golgotha). There they crucified him, and two others, one on either side of him with Jesus in the middle. Pilate had a placard written out and put on the cross, reading "JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS." This placard was read by many of the Jews because the place where Jesus was crucified was quite near Jerusalem, and it was written in Hebrew as well as in Latin and Greek. So the chief priests said to Pilate, "You should not write 'The King of the Jews,' but 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'"

To which Pilate retorted, "Indeed? What I have written, I have written."

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they divided his clothes between them, taking a quarter-share each. There remained his shirt, which was seamless—woven in one piece from the top to the bottom. So they said to each other, "Don't let us tear it; draw lots and see who gets it."

This happened to fulfill the scripture which says—

They parted my garments among them,
And upon my vesture did they cast lots.

19. 25 *Jesus provides for his mother from the cross*

While the soldiers were doing this, Jesus' mother was standing near the cross with her sister, and with them Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing by her side, and said to her, "Look, there is your son!" And then he said to the disciple, "And there is your mother!"

And from that time the disciple took Mary into his own home.

After this, Jesus realizing that everything was now completed, said (fulfilling the saying of scripture), "I am thirsty."

There was a bowl of sour wine standing there. So they soaked a sponge in the wine, put it on a spear, and pushed it up toward his mouth. When Jesus had taken it, he cried, "It is finished!" His head fell forward, and he died.



20. 1 *The first day of the week: the risen Lord*

But on the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala arrived at the tomb, very early in the morning, while it was still dark, and noticed that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. At this she ran, found Simon Peter and the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb and we don't know where they have put him."

Peter and the other disciple set off at once for the tomb, the two of them running together. The other disciple ran faster than Peter and was the first to arrive at the tomb. He stopped and looked inside and noticed the linen cloths lying there but did not go in himself. Hard on his heels came Simon Peter and went straight into the tomb. He noticed that the linen cloths were lying there, and that the handkerchief, which had been round Jesus' head, was not lying with the linen cloths but was rolled up by itself, a little way apart. Then the other disciple, who was the first to arrive at the tomb, came inside as well, saw what had happened, and believed. (They did not yet understand the scripture which said that he must rise from the dead.) So the disciples went back again to their homes.

But Mary stood just outside the tomb, and she was crying. And as she cried, she looked into the tomb and saw two angels in white who sat, one at the head and the other at the foot of the place where the body of Jesus had lain.

The angels spoke to her. "Why are you crying?" they asked.

"Because they have taken away my Lord, and I don't know where they have put him!" she said.

Then she turned and noticed Jesus standing there, without realizing that it was Jesus.

"Why are you crying?" said Jesus to her. "Who are you looking for?"

She, supposing that he was the gardener, said, "Oh, sir, if you have carried him away, please tell me where you have put him and I will take him away."

Jesus said to her, "Mary!"

At this she turned right round and said to him, in Hebrew, "Master!"

"No!" said Jesus, "do not hold me now. I have not yet gone up to the Father. Go and tell my brothers that I am going up to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

And Mary of Magdala went off to the disciples, with the news, "I have seen the Lord!" and she told them what he had said to her.

In the evening of that first day of the week, the disciples had met together with the doors locked for fear of the Jews. Jesus came

and stood right in the middle of them and said, "Peace be with you!"

Then he showed them his hands and his side, and when they saw the Lord the disciples were overjoyed.

Jesus said to them again, "Yes, peace be with you! Just as the Father sent me, so I am going to send you."

And then he breathed upon them and said, "Receive holy spirit.* If you forgive any men's sins, they are forgiven, and if you

* Lit., "receive holy spirit." Historically, the Holy Spirit was not given until Pentecost.

hold them unforgiven, they are unforgiven."

20. 24 *The risen Jesus and Thomas*

But one of the twelve, Thomas (called the twin), was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples kept on telling him, "We have seen the Lord," but he replied, "Unless I see in his own hands the mark of the nails, and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will never believe!"

Just over a week later, the disciples were indoors again and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood in the middle of them and said, "Peace be with you!"

Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here—look, here are my hands. Take your hand and put it in my side. You must not doubt, but believe."

"My Lord and my God!" cried Thomas.

"Is it because you have seen me that you believe?" Jesus said to him. "Happy are those who have never seen me and yet have believed!"

Jesus gave a great many other signs in the presence of his disciples which are not recorded in this book. But these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is Christ, the Son of God, and that in that faith you may have life as his disciples.



THE FIRST LETTER OF JOHN

2. 1 *Love and obedience are essentials for living in the light*

I write these things to you (may I call you "my children"—for that's how I think of you), to help you to avoid sin. But if a man

should sin, remember that our advocate before the Father is Jesus Christ the righteous, the one who made personal atonement for our sins (and for those of the rest of the world as well). It is only when we obey God's laws that we can be quite sure that we really know him. The man who claims to know God but does not obey his laws is not only a liar but lives in self-delusion. In practice, the more a man learns to obey God's laws, the more truly and fully does he express his love for him. Obedience is the test of whether we really live "in God" or not. The life of a man who professes to be living in God must bear the stamp of Christ.

I am not really writing to tell you of any new command, brothers of mine. It is the old, original command which you had at the beginning; it is the old message which you have heard before. And yet as I give it to you again I know that it is true—in your life as it was in his. For the darkness is beginning to lift and the true light is now shining in the world. Anyone who claims to be "in the light" and hates his brother is, in fact, still in complete darkness. The man who loves his brother lives and moves in the light, and has no reason to stumble. But the man who hates his brother is shut off from the light and gropes his way in the dark without seeing where he is going. To move in the dark is to move blindfold.



The man who does obey God's commands lives in God and God lives in him, and the guarantee of his presence within us is the Spirit he has given us.

4. *I repeat my warning against false teaching*

Don't trust every spirit, dear friends of mine, but test the spirits to discover whether they come from God or not. For the world is full of false prophets. You can test them in this simple way: every spirit that acknowledges the fact that Jesus Christ actually became man, comes from God, but the spirit which denies this fact does not come from God. The latter comes from the anti-christ, which you were warned would come and which is already in the world.

You, my children, who belong to God have already defeated this spirit, because the one who lives in you is far stronger than the antichrist in the world. The agents of the antichrist are children of the world; they speak the world's language and the world, of course, pays attention to what they say. We are God's children and only the man who knows God hears our message;

what we say means nothing to the man who is not himself a child of God. This gives us a ready means of distinguishing the true from the false.

4. 7 *Let us love: God has shown us love at its highest*

To you whom I love I say, let us go on loving one another, for love comes from God. Every man who truly loves is God's son and has some knowledge of him. But the man who does not love cannot know him at all, for God is love.

To us, the greatest demonstration of God's love for us has been his sending his only Son into the world to give us life through him. We see real love, not in the fact that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to make personal atonement for our sins. If God loved us as much as that, surely we, in our turn, should love one another!

It is true that no human being has ever had a direct vision of God. Yet if we love one another God does actually live within us, and his love grows in us toward perfection. And, as I wrote above, the guarantee of our living in him and his living in us is the share of his own Spirit which he gives us.

4. 14 *Knowing Christ means more love and confidence, less and less fear*

We ourselves are eyewitnesses able and willing to testify to the fact that the Father did send the Son to save the world. Everyone who acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God finds that God lives in him, and he lives in God. So have we come to know and trust the love God has for us. God *is* love, and the man whose life is lived in love does, in fact, live in God, and God does, in fact, live in him. So our love for him grows more and more, filling us with complete confidence for the day when he shall judge all men—for we realize that our life in this world is actually his life lived in us. Love contains no fear—indeed fully developed love expels every particle of fear, for fear always contains some of the torture of feeling guilty. This means that the man who lives in fear has not yet had his love perfected.

Yes, we love him because he first loved us. If a man says, "I love God" and hates his brother, he is a liar. For if he does not love the brother before his eyes how can he love the one beyond his sight? And in any case it is his explicit command that the one who loves God must love his brother too.

5. *I Only real faith in Christ as God's Son can make a man confident, obedient, and loving*

Everyone who really believes that Jesus is the Christ proves himself one of God's family. The man who loves the Father cannot help loving the Father's own Son.

The test of the genuineness of our love for God's family lies in this question—do we love God himself and do we obey his commands? For loving God means obeying his commands, and these commands of his are not burdensome, for God's "heredity" within us will always conquer the world outside us. In fact, this faith of ours is the only way in which the world has been conquered. For who could ever be said to conquer the world, in the true sense, except the man who really believes that Jesus is God's Son?

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

THE REVELATION OF JOHN

I. *I Concerning this book*

This is a Revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him so that he might show his servants what must very soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who is the witness of all that he saw—the message of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Happy is the man who reads this prophecy and happy are those who hear it read and pay attention to its message; for the time is near.



4. *I The vision of Heaven*

Later I looked again, and before my eyes a door stood open in Heaven, and in my ears was the voice with the ring of a trumpet, which I had heard at first, speaking to me and saying,

"Come up here, and I will show you what must happen in the future."

Immediately I knew myself to be inspired by the Spirit, and in my vision I saw that a throne had been set up in Heaven, and there was someone seated upon the throne. His appearance blazed like diamond and topaz, and all around the throne shone a halo like an emerald rainbow. In a circle around the throne there were twenty-four thrones and seated upon them twenty-four elders dressed in white with golden crowns upon their heads. From the central throne come flashes of lightning, noises, and peals of thunder. Seven lamps are burning before the throne, and they are the seven Spirits of God. In front of the throne there appears a sea of glass as clear as crystal. On each side, encircling the throne, are four living creatures covered with eyes in front and behind. The first living creature is like a lion, the second is like a calf, the third has a face like a man, and the fourth living creature appears like an eagle in flight. These four creatures have each of them six wings and are covered with eyes, all around them, and even within them. Day and night they never cease to say,

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is coming."

4. 9 *The ceaseless worship of Heaven*

And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanksgiving to the one who sits upon the throne, who lives for timeless ages, the twenty-four elders prostrate themselves before him who is seated upon the throne and worship the one who lives for timeless ages. They cast their crowns before the throne and say,

"Thou art worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power, for thou didst create all things; by thy will they existed and were created."



Then, standing in the very center of the throne and of the four living creatures and of the elders, I saw a Lamb that seemed to have been slaughtered. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God and are sent out into every corner of the earth. Then he came and took the book from the right hand of him who was seated upon the throne.

5. 8 *The new hymn of the created and of the redeemed*

When he had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders prostrated themselves before the Lamb. Each of them had a harp, and they had golden bowls full of incense,

which are the prayers of the saints. They sang a new song and these are the words they sang:

"Worthy art thou to take the book and break its seals, for thou hast been slain and by thy blood hast purchased for God men from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation! Thou hast made them a kingdom of priests for our God, and they shall reign as kings upon the earth."

5. 11 *The hymn of the whole company of Heaven*

Then in my vision I heard the voices of many angels encircling the throne, the living creatures, and the elders. There were myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, crying in a great voice,

"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!"

Then I heard the voice of everything created in Heaven, upon earth, under the earth, and upon the sea, and all that are in them saying,

"Blessing and honor and glory and power be given to him who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for timeless ages!"

The four living creatures said, "Amen," while the elders fell down and worshiped.



21. 1 *All things made new*

Then I saw a new Heaven and a new earth, for the first Heaven and the first earth had disappeared, and the sea was no more. I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, descending from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride dressed in beauty for her husband. Then I heard a great voice from the throne crying:

"See! The home of God is with men, and he will live among them. They shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death shall be no more, and never again shall there be sorrow or crying or pain. For all those former things are past and gone."

Then he who is seated upon the throne said,

"See, I am making all things new!"

And he added,

"Write this down, for my words are true and to be trusted."

Then he said to me,

"It is done! I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the thirsty water without price from the fountain of life. The victorious shall inherit these things, and I will be God to him and he will be son to me. But as for the cowards, the faith-

less and the corrupt, the murderers, the traffickers in sex and sorcery, the worshipers of idols and all liars—their inheritance is in the lake which burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

21. 9 *The vision of the new Jerusalem*

Then one of the seven angels who hold the seven bowls which were filled with the seven last plagues came to me and said,

“Come, and I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.”

Then he carried me away in spirit to the top of a vast mountain, and pointed out to me the city, the holy Jerusalem, descending from God out of Heaven, radiant with the glory of God. Her brilliance sparkled like a very precious jewel with the clear light of crystal. Around her she had a vast and lofty wall in which were twelve gateways with twelve angels at the gates. There were twelve names inscribed over the twelve gateways, and they are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. On the east there were three gateways, on the north three gateways, on the south three gateways and on the west three gateways. The wall of the city had twelve foundation stones and on these were engraved the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

21. 15 *The measurement of the city*

The one who was talking to me had a golden rod in his hand with which to measure the city, its gateways, and its wall. The city lies foursquare, its length equal to its breadth. He measured the city with his rod, and it was twelve thousand furlongs in each direction, for its length, breadth, and height are all equal. Then he measured its wall, and found that to be one hundred and forty-four half-yards high by human measurement (which the angel was using).

21. 18 *The splendor of the city's building*

The wall itself was built of translucent stone, while the city was of purest gold, with the brilliance of glass. The foundation stones of the wall of the city were fashioned out of every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, the fifth onyx, the sixth cornelian, the seventh goldstone, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth green goldstone, the eleventh zircon, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The street of the city was purest gold, gleaming like glass.

21. 22 *The splendor within the city*

I could see no Temple in the city, for the Lord, the Almighty God, and the Lamb are themselves its Temple. The city has no need for the light of sun or moon, for the splendor of God fills it with light, and its radiance is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. The city's gates shall stand upon day after day—and there will be no night there. Into the city they will bring the splendors and honors of the nations.

But nothing unclean, no one who deals in filthiness and lies, shall ever at any time enter it—only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

22. 1 *A further glimpse of the city*

Then he showed me the river of the water of life, sparkling like crystal as it flowed from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of the street of the city and on either bank of the river grew the tree of life, bearing twelve fruits, a different kind for each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Nothing that has cursed mankind shall exist any longer; the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be within the city. His servants shall worship him; they shall see his face, and his name will be upon their foreheads. Night shall be no more; they have no more need for either lamplight or sunlight, for the Lord God will shed his light upon them and they shall reign as kings for timeless ages.

22. 6 *The angel endorses the revelation*

Then the angel said to me,

"These words are true and to be trusted, for the Lord God, who inspired the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must shortly happen.

"See, I come quickly! Happy is the man who pays heed to the words of the prophecy in this book."



APPENDIX 1



*The Manuscripts
and Versions
of The New Testament*

THE "CANON" OF A HOLY SCRIPTURE

The early church knew no other sacred books than "the Law" (Pentateuch) and "the Prophets" (historical and prophetic books) of what is now "the Old Testament." These books of the Hebrew Bible as well as the Psalms were often quoted in the gospels and letters of the early Christians.

As a second generation arose, the preservation of "the sound doctrine" of the apostolic age came to be more and more difficult. Strange ideas and customs from Jewish and Hellenistic sects, especially those called the "Gnostics" (from the Greek word *gnosis*, "mystical knowledge"), crept into the church with the afflux of new converts. Many different books were read at worship services together with those of the Hebrew Bible, in addition to the gospels and the letters of Paul.

During the second century A.D. some Christians, influenced by anti-Semitic sects, rejected the Hebrew Bible altogether. One of them, Marcion the Gnostic, proposed a strictly Christian scripture, comprised exclusively of the gospel of Luke and ten letters of Paul. The idea of a "rule" or "canon" (from a word meaning "rod of standard measure") was born.

The majority of the Christian communities opposed this anti-Jewish bias. Little by little, the books which are now part of the New Testament imposed themselves on the church. No official Christian body recognized a "canon" of scripture until the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century.

For several generations, the list of the New Testament books was quite flexible. For example, some communities rejected the letter to the Hebrews and the second letter of Peter while others regarded the letter of Barnabas, the Shepherd of Hermas, the writings of Clement of Rome, etc., as part of the "canon." The present list of 27 books did not appear in written documents before the year 367.

THE ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS AND VERSIONS

The original text of the gospels and letters is completely lost. Fragments of several early copies, made on papyrus, have been discovered, chiefly in Egypt. The earliest of the great manuscripts, written on parchment in Greek capital letters (uncials), date from the fourth and fifth centuries. There are more than 150 of these large manuscripts, the most famous of which are the *Sinaiticus* and the *Alexandrinus*, both preserved in the British Museum; the *Vaticanus*, in the Vatican Library; the *Codex Bezae*, at Cambridge University; and the *Codex Freer*, in Washington.

There are also thousands of later copies, written in small Greek letters (*Minuscule Codices*). Soon, the books of the New Testament were translated into Syriac (which was spoken in the churches of Antioch and Syria), and into Coptic, Latin, etc. The Latin version of Jerome (fourth century) became the most influential channel for the transmission of the New Testament to the Western world, under the name of *Vulgate* ("common tongue").

MODERN STUDIES OF THE TEXT

In the sixteenth century, the Humanists and the Protestant reformers created a renewal of interest in the authentic text of the Bible as a whole and of the New Testament in particular. Erasmus published the first edition of the Greek text of the New Testament in modern times (1516). Scientific comparison of all the available manuscripts with their thousands of variants led to many editions of *The Greek New Testament* (New York, The American Bible Society, 1966).

MODERN TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE

Ever since the sixteenth century, a large number of English translations of the New Testament have been made. The *King James Version*, also known as the *Authorized Version*, was not a new translation when it was published (1611) but a revision of several

English versions which had appeared previously. The *Revised Standard Version* (1952) is only one of several translations which are available today. The J. B. Phillips translation presents The New Testament in conversational English.

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- W. D. Davies, *Initiation to the New Testament*, Garden City, New York, Doubleday, 1966 (540 pages).
- Robert A. Spivey and D. Moody Smith, Jr., *Anatomy of the New Testament*, New York, Macmillan, 1969 (509 pages).

APPENDIX 2

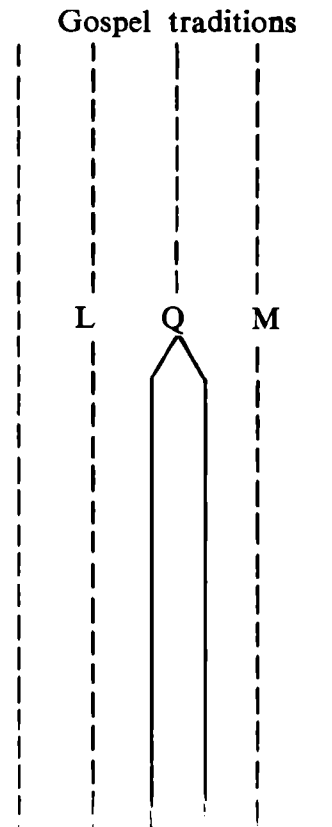


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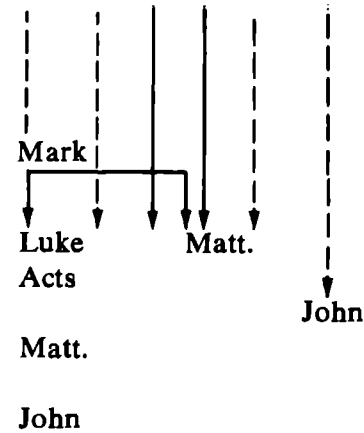


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